THE FALL OF THE MIGHTY PERSIAN EMPIRE

THE BATTLE OF QADISIYYAH

Abdul Malik Mujahid

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In the Name of Allah,

the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

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Preface

The subject of this monograph is the Battle of Al-Qadisiyyah, fought during the Caliphate of Umar bin Al-Khattab ﷺ, in which the Muslims decisively defeated the Persians. According to Professor Ahmed Ādil Kamal, who has done extensive research on the subject, the Battle of Al-Qadisiyyah took place in Sha'bān, the tenth month of the Islamic calendar, in the year 15 AH.

This victory heralded the downfall of the Sasanian Dynasty, paved the way for the conquest of Iraq and quickened Islamic expansion into Persia (Iran) and beyond. The Iranians had 240,000 troops, but the Muslims with about 30,000 soldiers still drove the Iranian Empire, one of the superpowers of the day, into the ground.

Muslim fighters displayed extreme personal bravery during the battle. In this monograph, you will encounter the harrowing incident of a disemboweled Muslim soldier who continued to fight until he was martyred. In a similar incident, Khansa ﷺ, the poetess, encouraged her four sons

to bravely plunge into enemy territory. They were all later martyred. You will also read about the heroic deeds of Abu Mihjan ﷺ and Amr bin Ma'dikarib ﷺ; and about the clever military trick played by Qa'qa bin Amr, in which he made the camels of the Muslim army look like huge elephants.

In another event in the heat of the battle, a westerly wind of great force blew away the sunshade or canopy of the Persian general Rustam's throne. At Al-Qadisiyyah, the Muslims were able to break the Persian might, dealing them a blow from which they would never recover. The Battle of Al-Qadisiyyah is therefore one of the most decisive battles in the history of humanity.

We hope this book will shed further light for Muslim and other readers on this critical period in Islamic history. We thank our production team, including Muhsin Farani (Lahore office), Qari Muhammad Iqbal (Research Section, Head Office Riyadh), English editor Abdul Waghied Misbach and senior design artist Shahzad Ahmad for helping to produce this illuminating publication. We pray that Allah, the Most High, blesses our efforts.

Abdul Mālik Mujahid
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Darussalam, Riyadh
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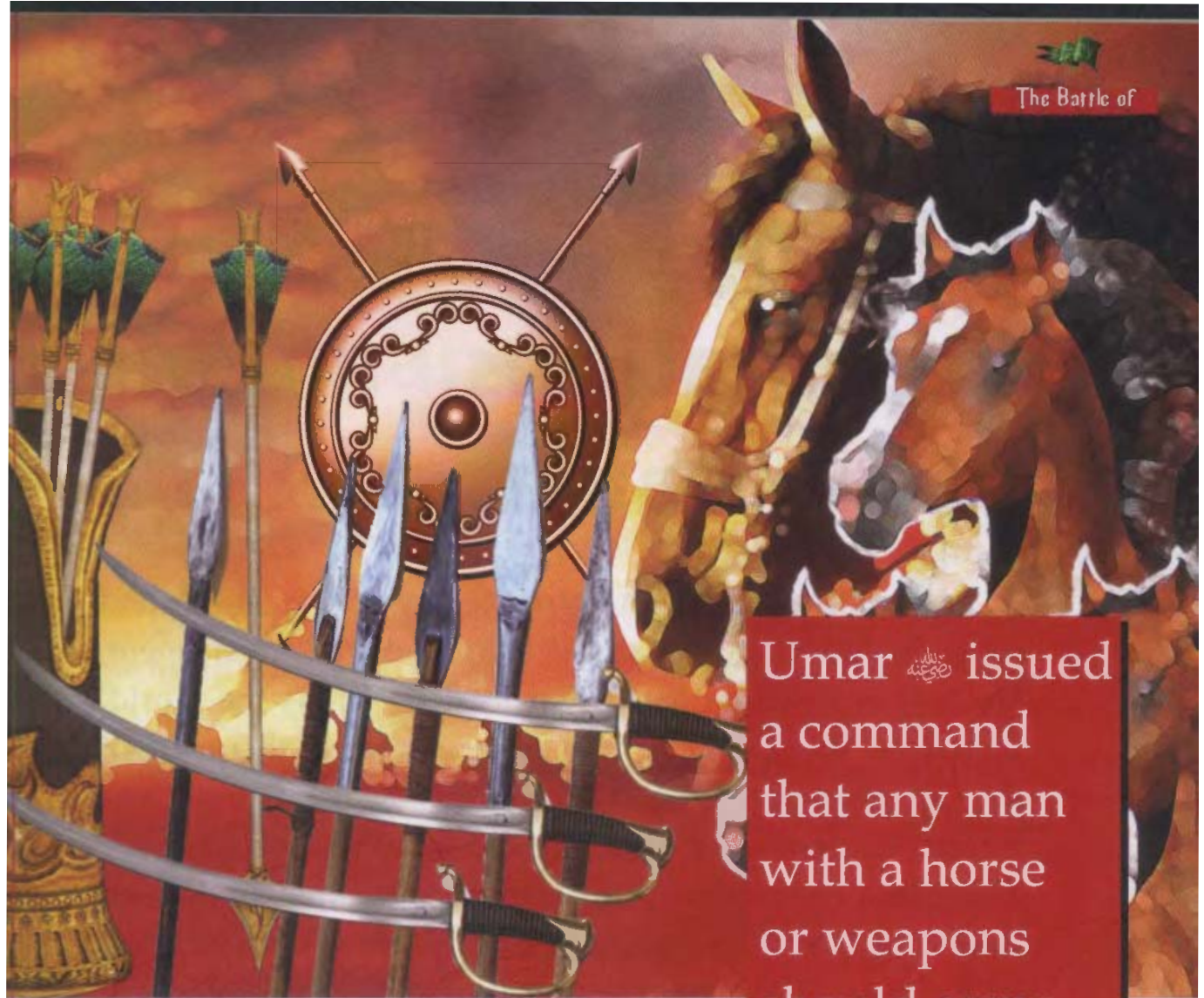
The Battle of **Al-Qadisiyyah**

[Sha'bān, 15 AH/September 636 CE]

This battle opened the doors of Iraq, Khurasan and Turkestan to the Muslims during the golden days of Islam. It took place during the Caliphate of the second Rightly-Guided caliph Sayyidana Fāruq, Umar bin Al-Khattab ﷺ.

During that period, the Muslim conquests were continuing on all fronts. The prophecy of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ that the religion would prevail was becoming a reality. Islam's fighters were successful wherever they went.

A few years before, the emperor of the Sultanate of Persia had torn up a letter from the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. The Prophet ﷺ had said, "Kisra hasn't torn up my letter, he has ripped his kingdom apart." The Prophet ﷺ also said to Adi bin Hātim ﷺ, "If you live long enough, you will one day witness the treasures of Kisra being conquered." (Kisra was the usual Arabic name or surname for the emperors of Persia or Iran.)

In the light of such utterances by the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, Umar ﷺ, the sublime hero of Islam sprang into action. He had a pretty good idea about the Zoroastrian enmity

towards Islam. This was the reason he kept an intense watch on the Iranian enemy. This was a splendid period. The unbelievers trembled in their citadels at the very thought of the Muslims.

Going over this history, one is able to see the detestable schemes between the last Kisra, Yezdgird the Third, and his generals. They planned to wipe out the Muslims completely by combining all their scattered resources into one formidable army to fight a decisive battle beyond the Euphrates River. They wanted to stem the spread of Islam. The Iranian Emperor said to his generals, "You don't lack weapons, wealth and manpower, so rise up and crush the Muslims."

The dignified hero of the Muslim community, Sayyidana Umar Al-Fāruq ﷺ, was mindful of his responsibilities. The strength of the great leadership of Madinah, the Radiant, was that its hand was always on the pulse of prevailing conditions.

After unfurling the flag of Islam in the land of Greater Syria, the Islamic leadership now considered protecting its frontiers against the dangers of the Iranian Zoroastrians.

In 15 AH/686 CE, when Umar bin Al-Khattab ﷺ learned that the Iranians were making fresh military preparations to fight the Muslims, he immediately met his trustworthy and intelligent commander Muthanna bin Hārithah Shaybani and said, "Go around to the surrounding tribes and recruit whoever is able to participate in battle." According to hagiographers, Umar Al-Fāruq ﷺ was the first person to introduce compulsory military conscription. (In modern times, compulsory military conscription is in force in several countries. It was at one stage also in place in the United States and Great Britain.)

Umar ﵁ issued a command that any man with a horse or weapons should come to Madinah.

Muthanna bin Hârithah

Plans for the Battle

After receiving his orders, Muthanna immediately started preparing for battle. He went to several regions, visited various tribes and drafted the young men into the army. He also mobilized Islamic detachments. Meanwhile, the Commander of the faithful, Umar bin Al-Khattab ﵁, issued a command that any man with a horse or weapons should come to Madinah. In this way, Umar ﵁ recruited every able-bodied man, and those with military expertise, whether they were poets, orators or chieftains.

Military Preparations of the Iranians

At the same time in Iran, Yezdgird the Third had consolidated his power and strengthened the government. He had sent letters to several leaders across the world, including the Emperor of China, to warn them about the alleged danger posed by the Muslims. All the Iranian leaders were obedient and loyal to their emperor Yezdgird. They were prepared to co-operate fully with their emperor. Kisra commanded the Iranians to collect every type of weapon from across the country. Angry tribes were appeased. Yezdgird also sent his scouts to the regions conquered by the Muslims. These agents forced the tribal leaders to break their agreements made with the Muslims, and asked them to renew their pledge to their former rulers.

Umar bin Al-Khattab ﷺ Commands the Army

Umar bin Al-Khattab ﷺ wanted to personally lead the army in this critical battle, so he appointed Ali bin Abi Talib ﷺ as his deputy to rule Madinah in his absence. He also made a decision to consult with Uthman bin Affan ﷺ and other prominent Companions before leaving Madinah.

Among the countless virtues of the Islamic administration, was its system of consultation, under which every member of the Advisory Council had the right to express his opinion. So an announcement was made for congregational prayer (*As-Salatu Ja'miah*) in the army camp; and Ali bin Abi Talib ﷺ was called up from Madinah.

Muthanna's Military Strategy

Meanwhile, Muthanna Shaybāni was also fulfilling his military duties. In a strategic move, he evacuated specific conquered regions and gathered the Muslims into one huge army in one location so that he could use them in a more effective manner. He consequently drafted large numbers of people into the army.

Abdur Rahman bin Awf's Opinion

"Anything is possible in war. Allah forbid, if you are martyred in the battle, the Muslims will become weak ..."

When Umar bin Al-Khattab ﷺ asked for the opinion of the Advisory Council on his proposal to lead the army in person and go to Iraq, a long debate followed. The majority gave their approval, but one prominent person, included among "The Ten promised Paradise (*Al-Ashara Al-Mubashara*)", namely Abdur Rahman bin Awf ﷺ, disapproved. In his address, he said,

"Anything is possible in war. Allah forbid, if you are martyred in the battle, the Muslims will become weak in their provinces. My opinion is that you should return to Madinah and appoint someone else as your deputy who is trustworthy, responsible and could be the commander-in-chief of the army."

His opinion was sound, resulting in a new debate among the participants. Several changed their minds and supported Abdur Rahman bin Awf ﷺ. Umar bin Al-Khattab ﷺ also liked the proposal. But the Advisory Council now faced the vital question: Who would lead the great army of Muslims?

The Appointment
of the Commander of the Muslim Army

Debate now began on this crucial matter. It was Abdur Rahman bin Awf ؓ who came up with the solution. When his turn came to speak, he pointed to Umar bin al-Khattab ؓ and said, "O Commander of the Faithful, you already have the most suitable person to lead this battle!" When people asked who this person was, he said, "He is a lion! His real name is Sa'd bin Mālik Az-Zuhri, but he is famously known by the name Sa'd bin Abi Waqqas."

Sa'd bin Abi Waqqas ؓ was also one of the ten promised Paradise by the Prophet ﷺ. Who could deny his leadership and superiority? He was undoubtedly "a lion of Islam". Umar ibn Al-Khattab ؓ also praised the choice and Sa'd bin Abi Waqqas ؓ was appointed as the Commander-in-Chief of the Iraq Campaign.

Sa'd bin Abi Waqqas ؓ was a maternal uncle of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ from the Quraysh tribe of Banu Zuhrah. The mother of Allah's Messenger ﷺ, Aaminah, the daughter of Wahb, also came from the Banu Zuhrah. Sa'd ؓ was one of the early Muslims and made immense sacrifices for Islam. Allah's Messenger ﷺ had encouraged him on many occasions. Once he said, "He is my maternal uncle. Let anyone with an uncle show the likes of him."

Umar's advice to the Commander-in-Chief

Sa'd bin Abi Waqqas' appointment as the commander-in-chief was an extremely wise decision. He was a man of the field and an expert in military strategy. The advice given by Umar bin Al-Khattab ﷺ to this important person is well worth reading. Umar ﷺ, said,

"Sa'd, don't let your close relationship with Allah's Messenger ﷺ, and being his maternal uncle, deceive you. Allah, Most High, doesn't eradicate badness with badness. Instead he ends badness with goodness. In the sight of Allah, all people are equal. Remember, always adhere to the way of the Noble Prophet ﷺ. It is my command, it is my advice. If you deviate from it, you will be the real loser."

According to hagiographers, in a farewell meeting before Sa'd ﷺ set out for Iraq, Umar bin al-Khattab ﷺ again counseled him to obey and submit to Allah Most High. He told him to supplicate profusely to Allah, "When Allah Most High loves someone; he casts his love into the hearts of people. When He hates someone, He also puts hatred for him into people's hearts."

Military Power of the Muslims

When Sa'd bin Abi Waqqas ﷺ set out from Madinah, he had an army of four thousand soldiers. According to another report, he had six thousand fighters with him. To say farewell, Umar bin Al-Khattab ﷺ escorted the army far out of Madinah, praying profusely along the way.

On their way through the region of Najd, the Commander of the Faithful sent reinforcements of four thousand more troops. Then in Najd itself, Sa'd ﷺ was joined by another seven thousand warriors. In Iraq, Muthanna bin Harithah was waiting for him with an army of twelve thousand soldiers.

An in-depth study of the biography of Sayyidana Umar Fāruq ﷺ shows that he was an extremely efficient general and an expert at strategic military deployments. He knew this was a critical campaign and therefore bolstered the army's morale and strength with many war experts.

Commander Muthanna's
Last Will and Death

The character of Muthanna deserves more than a passing look. He was second-to-none among the generals who secured various triumphs for Islam. He possessed great vigor and strategic skill. He never satisfied his personal needs during campaigns and after achieving victory. He was always cool and calm in the heat of battle. He was one of the great generals of the world.

It was Allah's Will that he suddenly fell seriously ill after being injured in battle. The wound had apparently healed but suddenly opened up again. When his illness took a turn for the worse and he realized that his end was near, he appointed a deputy in his place and immediately sent for his younger brother Mu'anna. When he arrived, he dictated to him his final will and sent a message to Sa'd bin Abi Waqqas ﷺ. Shortly afterwards, this great warrior of Islam breathed his last on the soil of Iraq, "To Allah we belong and to Him is our return." (Al-Baqarah 2: 156)

The will dictated by the general outlined the military strategy for the Muslim army. He warned that the Persian enemy was highly organized and quick to adapt to changes on the ground. This meant that the battle should not be fought on enemy territory. He called on the Muslims to fight the enemy on the borders of their provinces close to Arab regions or in those non-Arab fronts where it was easy to retreat. Victory for the Muslims would ensure control over the spoils of war in those regions. If they were defeated, Allah forbid, it would be easy to retreat to one center, gather their strength and devise new strategies to launch further attacks.

Commander Sa'd bin Abi Waqqas ﷺ Marries the Widow of Muthanna

When Sa'd bin Abi Waqqas ﷺ received the will of Muthanna, he affirmed Mu'anna bin Harithah as his deputy. At this point, it is worth mentioning that after the necessary waiting period, Sa'd ﷺ married Muthanna's widow, Salma bint Khasafah. According to the custom of that generation, the most appropriate way to show special care, sympathy and tenderness to the bereaved family, was for his widow to be honored with marriage. Salma was a very intelligent and resourceful woman. She also had some knowledge of her husband's warfare tactics.

In the light of Sayyidana Muthanna's will, Sa'd bin Abi Waqqas ﷺ decided to confront the Iranians on the side of the Euphrates on the plane of Al-Qadisiyyah. Al-Qadisiyyah was a town situated about 100 kilometers south of Kufah (Iraq); some 52 kilometers south-west of Hirah.

Rapid Communication System

Umar bin Al-Khattab ﷺ was undoubtedly a genius and was unmatched in shaping military strategies and deploying forces. He would develop such fine-tuned battle strategy that it would appear as if he was present at the battlefront. When I reflected on this aspect of his life, it dawned on me that Umar bin Al-Khattab ﷺ had established a splendid system of communication so that he could issue orders and get back information quickly. He had emissaries at his beck and call, which would carry his messages to the army with lightning speed.

Umar's Fresh Orders to the Islamic Force

"The greatest weapon against the enemy is heeding Allah. I warn all the commanders of the army and soldiers of a far greater danger than that of the enemy - the danger of sins."

Umar Fāruq ؓ knew what an army needed. So he provided both material support and guidance to his commanders and fighters. He was also determined to ensure that the soldiers strengthened their relationship with Allah.

On the march to Iraq, Umar ؓ sent an envoy with new orders to the army. Before reading this counsel of Umar bin Al-Khattab ؓ, it should be made clear that help and victory comes from Allah alone. These victories depend on the depth and strength of the believer's relationship with his Sustainer. Umar bin Al-Khattab's new and additional instructions were pretty long and detailed. Below is a brief mention of the orders.

- The greatest weapon against the enemy is heeding Allah. I warn all the commanders of the army and soldiers of a far greater danger than that of the

enemy - the danger of sins. I suggest you keep away from them.

- Since the enemy disobeys Allah's commands, Muslims will be victorious. It is essential, therefore, that you should obey Allah.
- The enemy is far stronger in terms of sheer weight of numbers and weapons. However, our real strength is in our connection to Allah.
- During your march, angels appointed to watch over you, are aware of your every act. Remain modest.
- Besides supplicating for victory over the enemy, also supplicate to Allah to keep yourselves on the straight path.
- O commander of the army Sa'd bin Abi Waqqas ﷺ!
  Be gentle with the Muslims.
  Do not let the hardships of travelling take a toll on them.
- When confronting the enemy, remain fresh, courageous and full of energy.
- Do not consider your enemy weak. You face an enemy who is fully equipped with the might of plenty men, material strength, cavalry and all sorts of weapons.
- Let your army rest and relax one whole day and

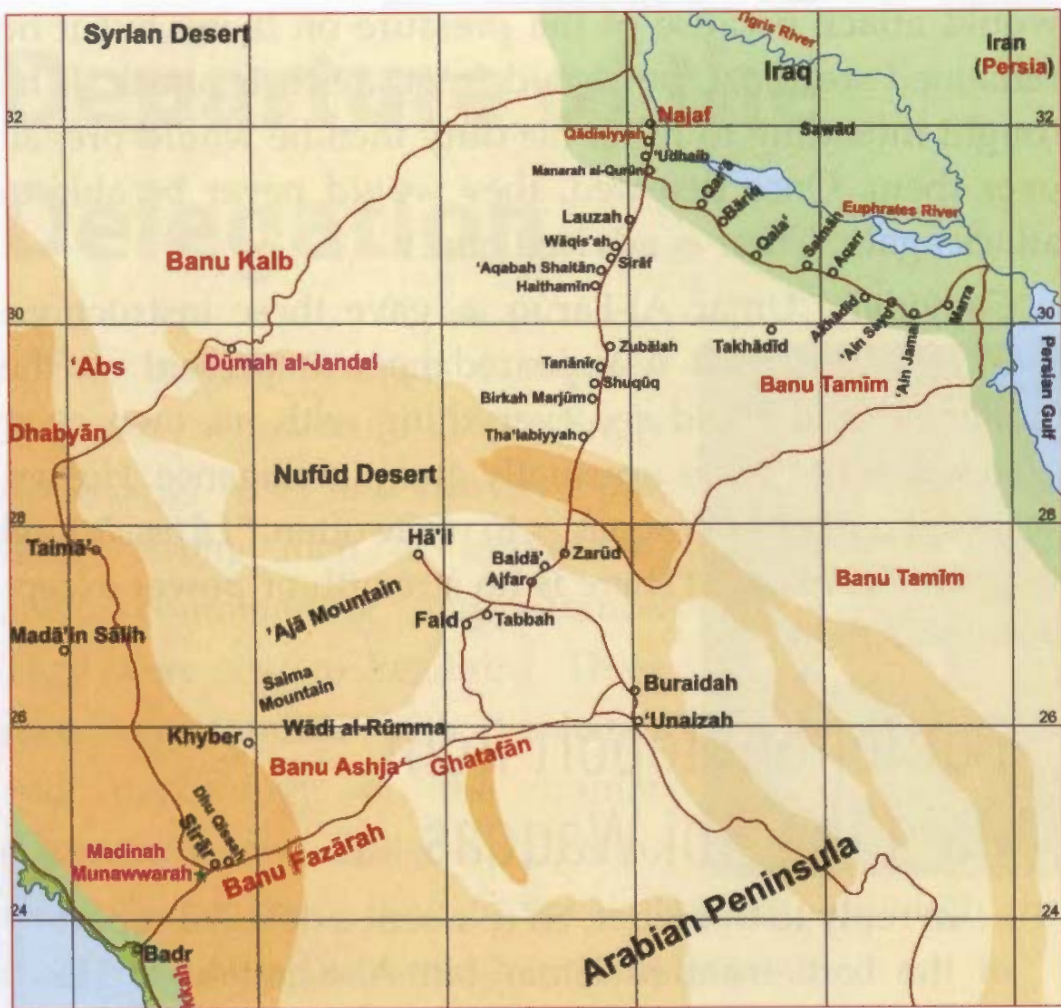
> "Gather intelligence with your spies in the land of the enemy so that none of their affairs are hidden from you."

night once a week.

- Gather intelligence with your spies in the land of the enemy so that none of their affairs are hidden from you.
- Keep away from people who tell lies. Their reports could be truthful at times, but it will not benefit you (in the end).
- People who are deceitful and dishonest, instead of spying for you, might spy against you.
- Always keep essential information concerning the enemy with you.

"Entrust the command of the detachments to persons who have the ability to endure hardships and are experts in warfare."

- Provide the vanguard detachments with horses of the best pedigree.
- Entrust the command of the detachments to persons who have the ability to endure hardships and are experts in warfare.
- Collect fully-fledged intelligence reports concerning all the affairs of the enemy, their movements, and gather information about every site and location in their land.
- Safeguard your army. Remain alert all night, to prevent surprise attacks.

This was a long letter with detailed guiding principles for fighting the enemy in battle.

The Location of the Battle of **Al-Qadisiyyah**

Al-Qadisiyyah is situated 50 kilometers from Najaf in Iraq. In a letter, Umar bin Al-Khattab ﷺ ordered Sa'd bin Abi Waqqas ﷺ to march to the borders of Iraq. A skilled strategist and planner with access to up-to-date information from the battlefield, Umar ﷺ ordered the army to establish posts at the edge of Al-Qadisiyyah and to place forces on the plains between the desert and villages. He told Sa'd ﷺ to ensure the open plain was in front of him, to hold his ground and not to move forward. He said that the enemy

would attack because of the pressure on them, but if he remained steadfast, he would frustrate their attack. If he fought intending to fulfill his duty then he would prevail over them. Once defeated, they would never be able to attack again, Umar ﷺ advised him.

Sayyidana Umar Al-Fāruq ﷺ gave these instructions in such a way that it appeared he was present on the battlefield and could see everything with his own eyes. This was proof of his unusually great intelligence. He had asked Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqas ﷺ to recite often, "*Lâ hawla walâ quwwata illâ billah,*" (There is no strength or power except through Allah).

Battlefront report from Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqas ﷺ

In reply to this letter, Sa'd ﷺ sent a detailed report of the battlefront to Umar bin Al-Khattab ﷺ. He informed him that several tribes that had previously made peace with the Muslims, had rebelled and joined the Iranians. Yezdgird had appointed a new commander named Rustam to lead the Iranian forces.

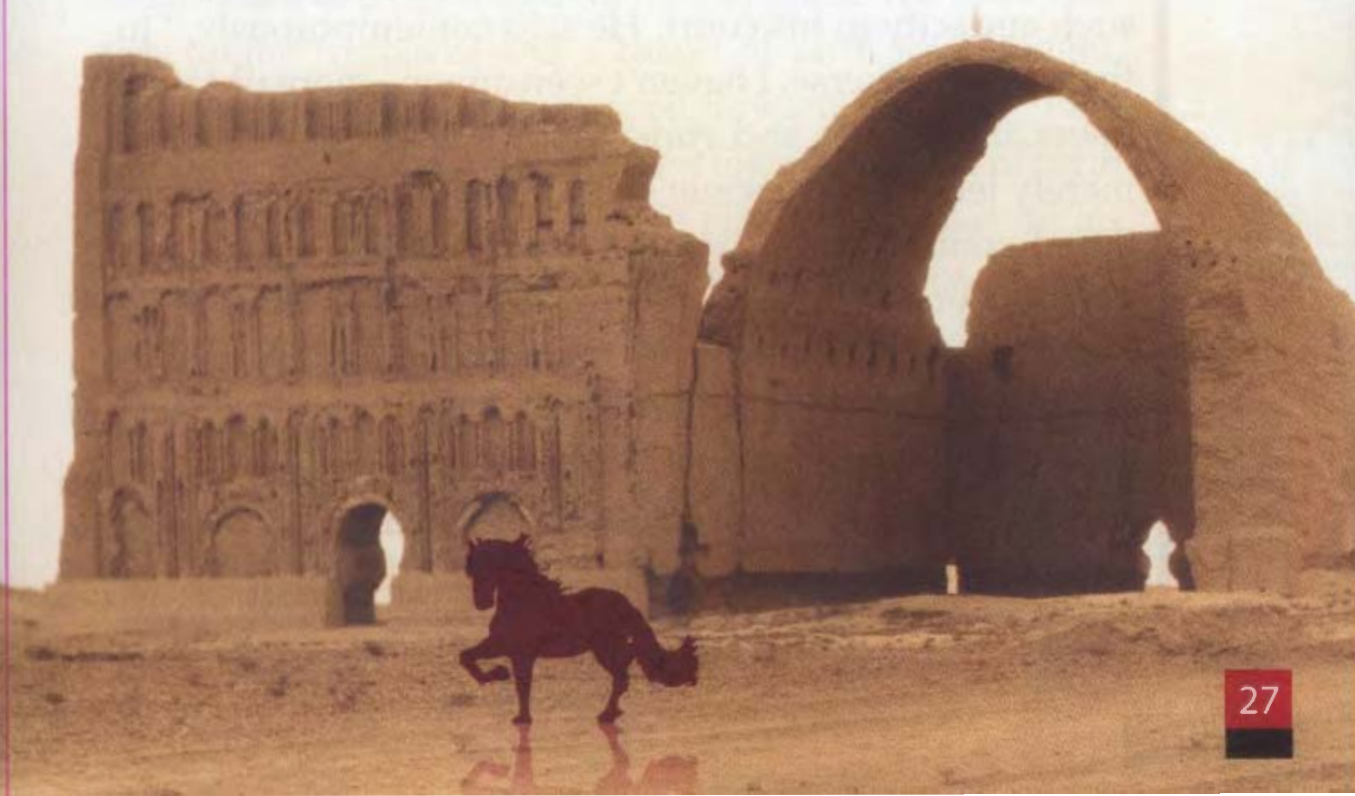
Another Letter from Amir Al-Mu'mineen

Sayyidana Umar Al-Fāruq ﷺ, Amir Al-Mu'mineen (Commander of the Believers), wrote to Sayyidana Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqas ﷺ to send a delegation to the emperor of Iran to invite him to embrace Islam. Sa'd ﷺ was ordered to select a strong, discerning and wise delegation. This invitation would prove why the enemy was weak and the Muslims strong.

Departure of the Delegation

Yezdgird

Sa'd bin Abi Waqqas ﷺ selected 14 men who were exceedingly discerning, wise, and heavily built; large, strong men of importance and commanding appearance! They were sent to Yezdgird. These men were familiar with the habits and psychology of the Iranian community, and skilled in fighting them. Some knew how to speak Persian, although the dialogue took place through interpreters.

Yezdgird asked the Muslins, "What brings you here? Are you taking advantage of our preoccupation with internal fights and quarrels?"

Speech of the Head of the Islamic Delegation at the Court of Yezdgird

In response to Yezdgird, the head Nu'mān Mūqrin ﷺ spoke out, "There is no doubt Allah showed us kindness and mercy and sent us His Messenger ﷺ who commanded us to do good and forbade us to do evil. He promised us, if we responded, the good of this world and the Hereafter. Some people accepted his invitation and some rejected it."

Mūqrin ﷺ described the rise of Islam briefly, but in a fairly comprehensive way, and said, "We invite you to embrace Islam. If you do not accept it, you shall have to pray *Jizyah* or the tribute and you will fall under our protection. If you accept Islam, we will not harm you, and we will go back from here. If you choose to pay *Jizyah* or the protection tax, we will accept it and in return, protect you. Eventually you will be free to govern your own affairs."

Yezdgird's Reaction

When Yezdgird heard this, he flew into a rage. It had never crossed his mind that the Arabs would talk with such audacity in his court. He said contemptuously, "In the whole universe, I haven't seen anyone more ill-fated, fewer in number and ruder than you people. We had merely let you have some suburban quarters. You never dared confront us. If you have too high an opinion of yourself or have fallen into a misunderstanding, then make no mistake about it. Listen carefully! Although our conditions are also not good, let the season arrive, food will be made available to you. You will be shown respect. You will be given clothes to wear. And we will appoint a ruler who will treat you gently."

Mughirah bin Zararah's Address

Then another orator of the Islamic army, Mughirah bin Zararah, hit back at Yezdgird. He rose and addressed the Persian leader, "Whatever you've mentioned about our bad situation is correct. We were far more destitute than that. Then Allah Most High showed us His grace and kindness. He sent us His Prophet and Messenger ﷺ." Mughirah then repeated what Nu'man ؓ had said and added, "Now choose in humiliation to pay the *Jizyah* or protection tax, or the sword will decide. Better still, embrace Islam and ensure your salvation."

The Return of the Delegation

Yezdgird shouted at them, "Had it not been an international law not to kill envoys, I would have you slain, all of you. Be gone." Then he beckoned to a slave to bring a basket of earth and to let the mightiest and the noblest among them bear it as a burden out of the city gates. The command was promptly obeyed and a basket of earth was brought. Āsim bin Amr Tamimi ؓ stepped forward and said, "I am the most noble among us!" He then lifted the basket of earth and walked out of the palace. He placed the basket on his charger, mounted and rode back to the army camp.

Sa'd bin Abi Waqqas ؓ had been waiting anxiously for the return of the delegation. Āsim ؓ entered and said, "Glad tidings! Be of good cheer! By Allah, Allah has given us the keys of this country (because they had placed the soil of their land on our heads)."

The Confederates

Majma' Al-Asyal

Quraish

Ghatfan

Banu Sulaim

Fazarah

Uhud

Banu Kinanah

Ashja'

Banu Murrah

Banu Asad

Harratul-Wabarah

Volcanic Rocks

Banu Harithah

The Trench

Al-Midhadh

An-Nubait

Banu Abdul-Ash-hal and Za'wara

Banu Zafar

As-Sunh

Banu Al-Harith from Al-Khazraj

The Prophet's Mosque

Al-Fath Mosque

Banu An-Najar

Baqi

The Trench
The Expedition of the Confederates

Shawwal 5 A.H.

"And when the eyes grew wild and the hearts reached to the throats." (Qur'ân 33:10)

The Prophet's Prophecy About Iran

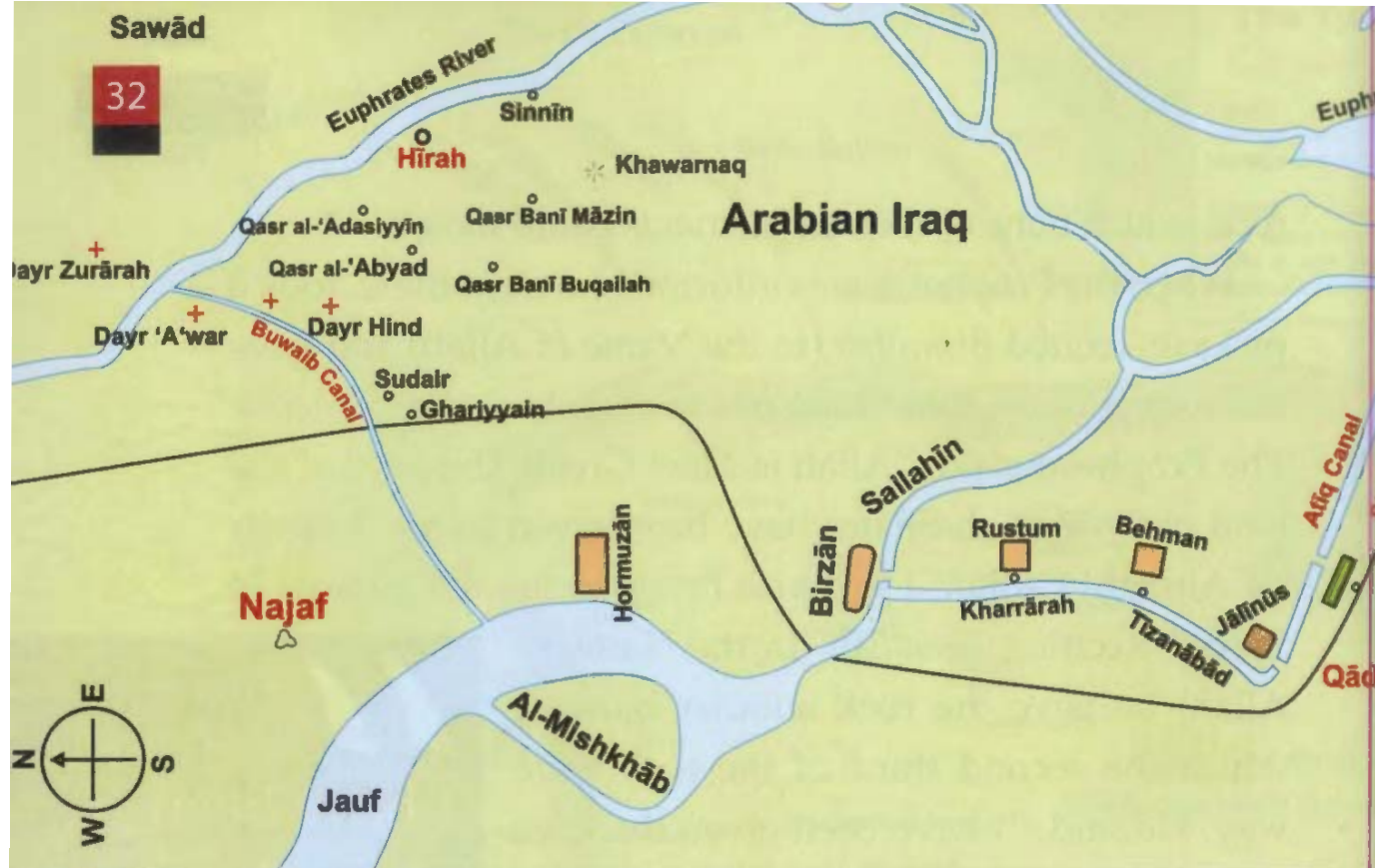
As I write on this topic, I am reminded of a scene during the Battle of the Trench. A prophecy made by the Messenger of Allah ﷺ springs to mind.

During that battle, the Muslims dug a trench to thwart an attack by the enemy. The Prophet ﷺ made each section of his community responsible for a part of the trench and he also worked with them. They went out at dawn every day after the Prayers, and came home at twilight. Allah's Prophet ﷺ would help both the Emigrants and the Helpers, sometimes with a pickaxe or shovel and sometimes as a carrier. He ordered that he should always be informed of any unusual difficulty wherever he was working. The first cry for help came from a Companion, who had dug down to a very hard

rock, which none of their implements could loosen.

When the Prophet ﷺ was informed he went there, took a pickaxe, recited *Bismillah* (In the Name of Allah) and gave the rock a blow. One third of the rock broke into pieces. The Prophet ﷺ said, "Allah is Most Great! The keys of the land of Syria (Ash-Shām) have been given to me. I swear by Almighty Allah! I see with my eyes the red palaces of Syria." Reciting *Bismillah* (In the Name of Allah) he gave the rock another blow at which the second third of the rock gave way. He said, "I have been given the keys to Iran. By Allah! I see the White Palace of Kisra of Madā'in at this time with my (own) eyes." Reciting *Bismillah*, he gave the rock a third blow. It split the remaining rock into fragments. Allah's Messenger ﷺ now said, "Allah is Most Great! I have been given the keys to Yemen. By Allah! I see standing here the gates of San'ā with my eyes!"

> "I have been given the keys to Iran. By Allah! I see the White Palace of Kisra of Madā'in at this time with my (own) eyes."

One should remember that these prophecies were made when the Muslims lived under extremely difficult conditions. It was a time when stones were tied to the Prophet's stomach; when the Quraysh and other tribes had gathered near Madinah with a formidable army of 10,000 soldiers. How many years did it take to fulfill the prophecy of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ? The Battle of the Trench took place in the year 5 AH, and after only ten years, in the year 15 AH, the prophecy of Allah's Messenger ﷺ was fulfilled concerning the conquest of the White Palace.

Rustum and his army near Qādisiyyah

A Glance at the Military Strength of the Enemy

In Irāq, Madā'in (Ctesiphon) was situated on the bank of the Tigris. From there, Rustam Farrukhzād Al-Armani marched south. His first stopped in Kutha, which was situated between Babil (Babylon) and Madā'in (Ctesiphon). According to some reports, Prophet Ibrahim (AS) was born there. Rustam had a fully-equipped army of 100,000 soldiers. The Commander of the army was proud of their strength. He appeared intoxicated with success even before the battle.

Rustam's Conversation with an Arab

Rustam happened to meet an Arab man and asked him, "Why have come here?" The Arab replied, "Hand over your country to us. Be all ears! In accordance with Allah's promise, we have come here to acquire it." Rustam made a quick and clever remark, "Oh no! Then we would be put to shame at your hands."

The answer of this Arab man is worth reading. He said, "It is your deeds that have disgraced your people, which have been written down in your fate. Don't let the strength of your army delude you. You are not fighting a human being, but rather an irrevocable fate."

Rustam exploded with a rage and ordered the man killed.

Naqsh-e-Rustam in Iran

Sinful Deeds of the Iranian Army

As the army marched forward, it passed through a habitation called Burs, a village between Kufah and Hillah. The army robbed the people of their possessions and raped their women. The inhabitants of Burs went to Rustam with their complaints. Rustam rose to address the prominent people of his community, and said, "By Allah, the Arab spoke the truth. It is our deeds that put us to shame." Then he affirmed the character and good behavior of the Muslims, and said,

> "By Allah, the Arab spoke the truth. It is our deeds that put us to shame."

"By Allah, even though they are in a state of war, the treatment of the Arab soldiers of the inhabitants is far better. Although they are fighting them, their behavior is far superior."

This was the enemy commander's opinion of our predecessors. Remember, people are judged on their behavior.

A Close Watch on the Enemy's Movements

Under the Muslim intelligence system, Sa'd bin Abi Waqqas ﷺ had been receiving information regarding every movement of the enemy. When the enemy entered the boundaries of Al-Qadisiyyah, Sa'd ﷺ sent Amr bin Ma'dikarib and Tulayhah bin Khuwaylid Al-Asadi ﷺ, along with ten other men on a scouting mission: to gather information about the enemy. It is worth mentioning here that Tulayhah ﷺ had been one of the prominent leaders of the apostates during the era of Abu Bakr As-Siddiq ﷺ. Later, however, he repented sincerely. He went deep into the enemy region and gained detailed information on their soldiers and equipment. He then prepared an exhaustive report and gave it to Sa'd ﷺ, the commander-in-chief.

Sassanid soldiers

Rustam now marched forth from Hirah and camped near the river Atiq in the vicinity of Al-Qadisiyyah. The river lay between the two armies. The Iranian army had 33 elephants. When they camped, Rustam sent word to Sa'd ﷺ saying, "Send us an envoy, we want to talk to him."

Ribei bin Aamir in the Court of Rustam

Sa'd bin Abi Waqqas ﷺ sent Ribei bin Aamir. When he entered the court, he saw Rustam seated on a throne of gold. Even the pillows and cushions were laced with gold thread. In contrast, Ribei ﷺ was on a horse, he had his hand on a sword in a scabbard made of shaggy cloth, and his spear was bound with a strap of sinew.

> The conquests were accomplished by people whose swords were not embellished by gold and silver but by sinews (al-alâbiyy), lead and iron.

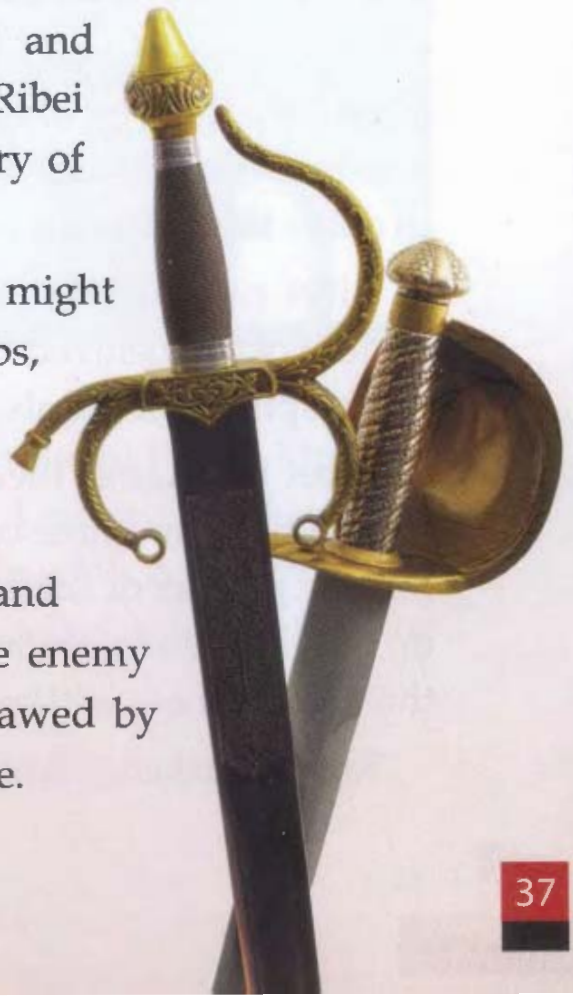
The Arabs used to bind a cracked spear with a fresh and moist sinew taken from a camel's neck, which would dry out and make the weapon strong and usable again. This has special significance because it shows the rugged and praise-worthy ways of the Arabs, which was in stark contrast to the luxury of the Iranians. Imām Al-Bukhari has recorded a hadith, "The conquests were accomplished by people whose swords were not

embellished by gold and silver but by sinews (*al-alâbiyy*), lead and iron." (Abu Umamah reports, hadith 2909, Al-Bukhari, *Kitabul Jihâd*.)

A precious carpet adorned the tent of Rustam. Ribei bin Aamir moved forward, trampling over the carpet with the hooves of his horse. Then he dismounted and tied his horse to the edges of two cushions. He left the bridles between the two pillows. Then he took the cloth, which was the cover of his camel, and wrapped it around himself like a mantle.

The Iranian soldiers said to him, "Lay down your arms." But, Ribei retorted, "I have not come to you on my own initiative. I have been called; therefore, I will not lay down my arms on your orders."

Ribei moved forward in a stately manner. He walked with short steps, leaning on his spear, piercing the carpet. When he came close to Rustam, he sat down on the floor, cross-legged and plunged his spear into the carpet. Ribei said, "We will not sit on this finery of yours."

Noble readers, some of you might probably think that he was perhaps, Allah forbid, an uncouth Bedouin unfamiliar with royal decorum. This was not the case. He was manifesting his strength and competence. He was showing the enemy that he was not going to be overawed by this kingly pomp and circumstance.

Rustam's Conversation with Ribei bin Aamir

Rustam and Ribei then started talking.

Rustam: "Why have you come here with your armies?"

Ribei: "Allah has sent and brought us here to extricate those, who so desire, from their servitude to men and make them servants of Allah; and to remove His servants from the constrictions of this world and show them the spacious path to the Hereafter. We are also here to extricate people from the cruelty of the false religions and bestow on them the justice of Islam. He has sent us to bring His religion to His creatures and to invite them to Islam."

They then proceeded to ask and answer each others' questions. Ribei continued to describe the distinctions and merits of Islam. Suddenly, Rustam proposed, "Is it possible to delay this battle for a while?"

Ribei replied, "Yes, it is possible, because it was the custom of our beloved Prophet ﷺ to give the enemy a three day respite. You are also given respite for three days."

Ribei bin Aamir then gave Rustam the opportunity to choose between three options, "Embrace Islam, choose to pay the poll tax or the *Jizyah,* or be prepared to fight. If you do not choose any of the three options during the respite of three days, there will be war on the fourth day."

Rustam asked, "Are you the leader of the Muslims?"

Ribei answered, "No, I'm not, but the Muslims are like one body. They are all parts of a whole. The most humble among them can promise protection on behalf of the most noble."

After this session of dialogue, Ribei returned to his camp.

After his departure, Rustam consulted and sought the advice of his companions. But his companions tried to belittle Ribei's remarks. Rustam, however, was a wise commander and said, "Woe betide you! I have observed his judgment, speech and his conduct. Arabs wear simple garments, but they place a great deal of attention on lineage and ancestral glory."

"Woe betide you! I have observed his judgment, speech and his conduct. Arabs wear simple garments, but they place a great deal of attention on lineage and ancestral glory."

The next day, Rustam sent a message to the Muslims saying, "Send Ribei to us again. I want to talk to him once more." But Sa'd ﷺ sent Hudhayfah ﷺ instead, who then repeated exactly what Ribei ﷺ had told Rustam the previous day.

Mughirah bin Shu'bah's Departure to Meet Rustam

On the third day, Rustam again sent a message, saying, "Send another man to us," so Sa'd bin Abi Waqqas ﷺ sent Mughirah bin Shu'bah ﷺ, chieftain of the renowned tribe of Shaqif. Apart from having links with the region of Tāif, and being a great leader, Mughirah bin Shu'bah ﷺ was intelligent and wise.

Before Mughirah bin Shu'bah ﷺ arrived for the talks, Rustam commanded that the tents be well decorated. There were silk and brocade sheets, costly curtains

> "Look at your ordinary clothes, you have patches sown on them. When you meet a leader, you should be dressed in proper attire."

and dazzlingly dressed attendants and servants. Rustam wanted to enhance the Persian status with pomp and ceremony.

In contrast, Mughirah bin Shu'bah wore clothes with patches! He had a sword with no scabbard and that was wrapped in rags. When Mughirah arrived at the gate, the guard detained him and said, "Look at your ordinary clothes, you have patches sown on them. When you meet a leader, you should be dressed in proper attire." The gatekeeper gave Mughirah new clothes and added, "Leave this sword with me." But Mughirah said, "I will meet your commander in the same condition in which I arrived. If you people do not want this meeting to take place, I will go back to my camp." When Rustam was told about this, he said, "Let him come in whatever fashion he wants."

The Iranians were dressed in their best attire, wearing crowns and clothing laced with gold. Their carpets were as long as a bow shot. They had to walk this distance to meet their chief.

Mughirah's Speech in the Court of Rustam

Mughirah ﷺ walked into the court in a calm and relaxed manner, pricking the carpets with the tip of his sword. He then went to sit down cross-legged on Rustam's throne. A murmur of complaints and dissent rose from among the courtiers. *What an uncultured man! Arabs are very ignorant.* Eyebrows were raised.

Mughirah ﷺ cast a glance at Rustam and began to address the courtiers,

"O barbarians! We were the victims of a great misunderstanding concerning you. We thought you were highly intelligent, clever, thoughtful and possessed reasoning. But I realized after coming here that you have nothing of what is commonly known as intellect. I think there is no nation more excitable and foolish than you are. You like the slavery of your chiefs, while we, the Arabs, are all equal to each other. Our rulers are in no way different from the ruled. I thought you treated your people as equals as we do. But some of you are masters over others. Such behavior is unacceptable among us. Our commander is the busiest person among us. He works continuously. We consider leadership an additional burden and responsibility. There is nothing luxurious and relaxing about it."

Rustam's Offer to the Muslim Troops

For Rustam, it was unusual and unexpected to face such great flair and fearlessness. His experience of Arabs until then had been as people ruled by the Persians, just like their forefathers. There were several places under Persian control at that time. When Nu'man bin Mundhir Abu Qabus, the king of the Arabs, paid a visit to the Kisra, he had asked for grains and cereals. Consequently, Rustam had envisaged that the Arabs were hungry and weak. A paltry sum of money, a little temptation would be enough to purchase them, he thought.

March of the Muslims towards Sinnīn

Rustam said to Mughirah ﷺ, "We are well aware of your financial condition. Your country is one of the poorest in the world. You are penniless and destitute. Your garments and your status is clear proof. I know that the only reason you're doing this is because of the distress facing you in your land. I pity you, so I announce that each and every youth of yours be given plenty cereals, grains and dates.

Each of your companions will receive a camel-load of commodities. As for your daring to prove yourselves our equals, we forgive you."

Mughirah's Counter Address

Mughirah bin Shu'bah ﷺ then responded, "Commander, what you have mentioned about our destitution, privation and conflicts, is true. We are quite aware of it and do not deny it. There is no doubt, we were the poorest community. Grinding hunger used to drive us to eat anything that fell to our lot. We were steeped in ignorance and misguidance. We used to kill our dear ones so that we could seize their wealth. Allah Most High then graced us. He sent us a Prophet ﷺ, who called us to his Lord and we responded. He guided us to the Straight Path and showed us the gates of good. Consequently, in place of hatred, springs of affections gushed forth in our hearts!"

A picture of a Sassanid sword

Mughirah's Swordsmanship

Rustam cast a scornful look at Mughirah's sword and remarked, "Is it that sword you rely on? It unfortunately does not have even a scabbard." Then he beckoned to a courtier and ordered him to fetch an ornate sword. When the sword was brought to him, Rustam said to Mughirah ﷺ, "Throw away that sword of yours and take this superb one instead." Mughirah ﷺ looked contemptuously at Rustam and brandished his sword, which flashed like lightning in the light. A moment later, he struck the ornate Iranian sword with a fierce blow, breaking it into two pieces.

Mughirah's Offer to the Iranians

Mughirah ﷺ now turned to Rustam and said, "You have only three options. Embrace Islam, choose to pay the poll tax (*Jizyah*), or war will decide between us. And if you need our protection, then be our slave, and pay the poll tax out of hand, while being humiliated, otherwise, it is war." Rustam snorted, knitted his brows and flew into a rage. He said derisively to Mughirah ﷺ, "If you had not been an envoy I would have slain you for your audacity. But listen, tomorrow, yes tomorrow, I will destroy you completely."

Rustam Consults with the Iranian Leaders

Mughirah bin Shu'bah ﷺ then returned to his camp. He had struck terror into the hearts of the enemy. Rustam now met in private with various Iranian dignitaries, and one of them said, "How different are these people from you! What will happen after this? The first two envoys came, annoyed you, and caused you anxiety. Then this one came. There was no difference between them. They did the same thing. I do not know if they are speaking the truth. But we shall have to admit that these people are extremely brave. They are more effective than anyone else in expressing their purpose. Nothing can stand against them. By Allah! If they maintain the same character and protect themselves from being stained with evil, they will have no differences in their lives! They will have no barrier to fulfilling their intentions."

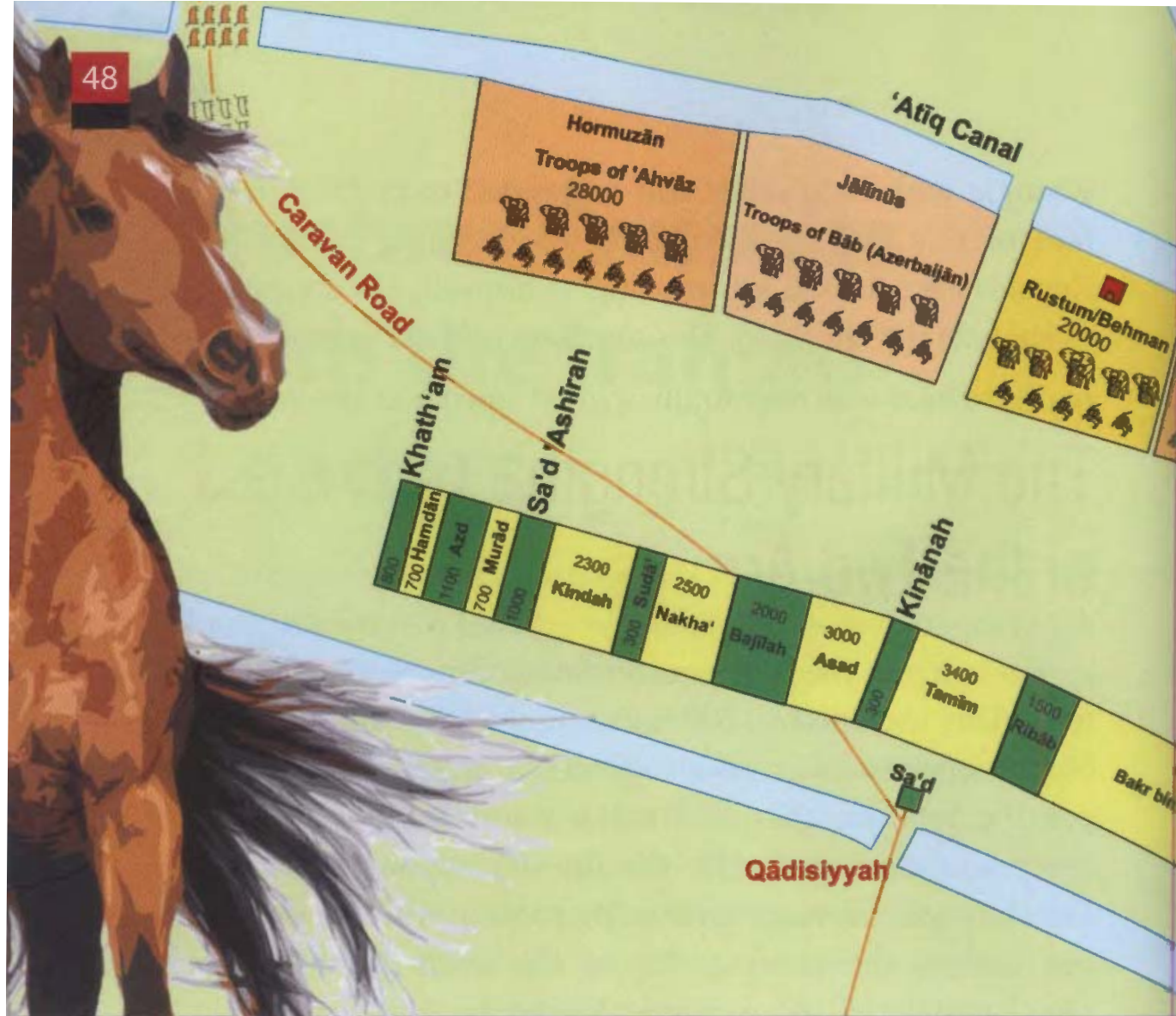
The Iranians then proceeded to

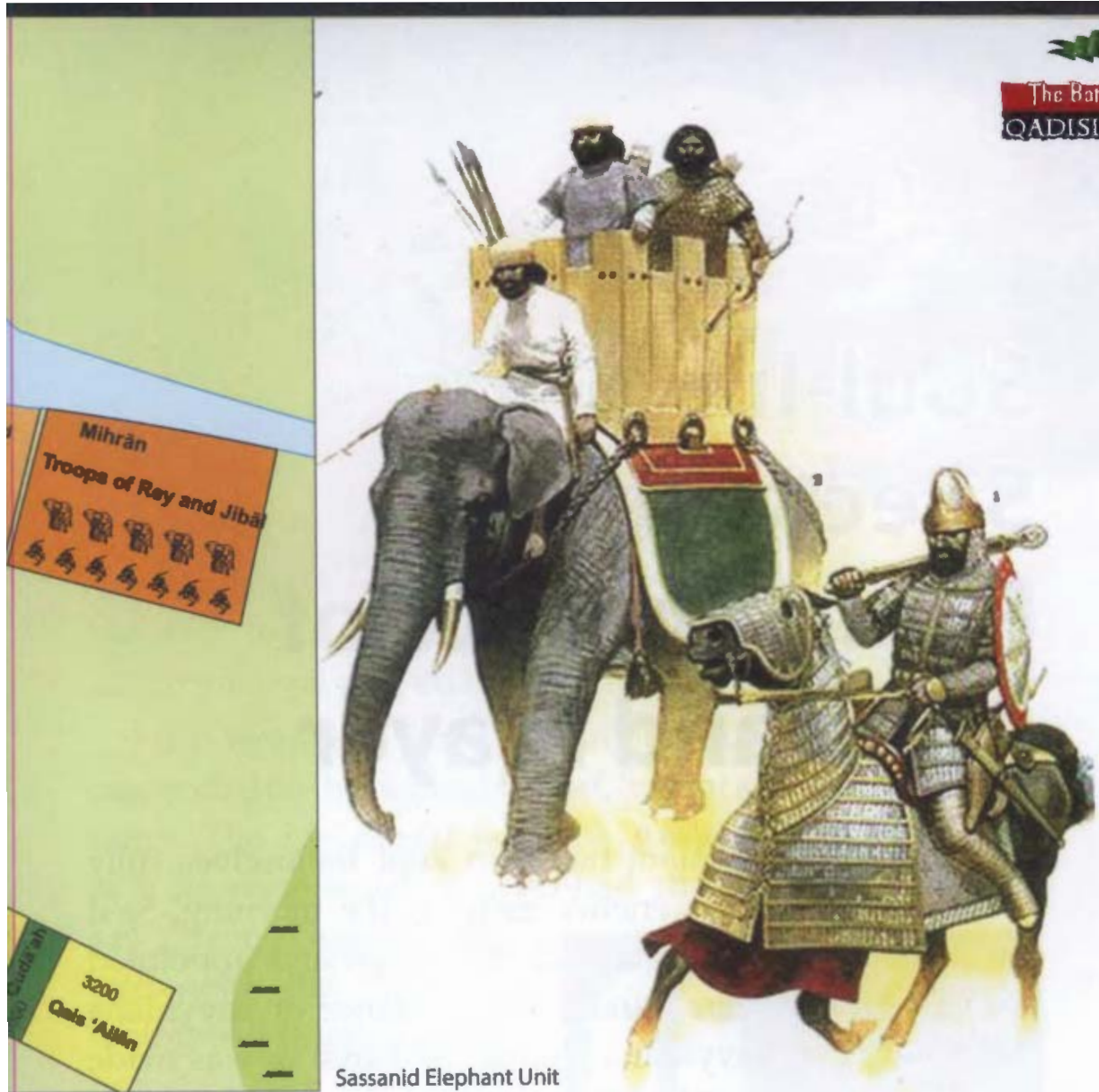
wrangle with each other and pretended to be bold in the face of this new threat. As their wrangling intensified, Rustam also started murmuring to himself. He continued to analyze the situation. The courtiers refused to accept the reality. There was eventually a great uproar in the court.

The Military Strength of the Two Armies

The army of the Iranians consisted of more than 200,000 men. This included 60,000 horsemen, 60,000 infantry, and 80,000 servicemen or reserve forces. Some historians have put the total number of Iranian troops at 240,000. This army was equipped with the finest weapons. They had also brought 18 elephants with palanquins. As pointed out earlier, the commander of the army was Rustam bin Farrukhzād Al-Armani. Militarily and politically, this general was well-known in Iraq. Alongside him, Hurmuzan, Jālinus, Bahman Jadhawayhi and several other brave commanders were leading the Iranian detachments.

The Muslim army consisted of 32,000 soldiers. They were later joined by reinforcements of 6,000 soldiers from Syria, increasing the total to 38,000. The command of the Muslim army was in the hands of Sa'd bin Abi Waqqas ﷺ.

This decisive battle took place on Sha'ban 13, 15 AH, corresponding to September 20, 636 CE and lasted for four days.

The Formation of the Muslim and the Iranian Armies

The river Atiq lay between the Muslims and the Iranians. The Iranians used a bridge to cross the river. They had soldiers sitting in huge boxes on the backs of the elephants. It was a remarkable coincidence that the commander of the army of Islam, Sayyidana Sa'd bin Abi Waqqas ﷺ had been afflicted with sciatica (*irk an-nasa*). He had also developed

Sassanid Elephant Unit

boils that prevented him from riding a horse. In fact, it was so severe he was unable to sit. He was therefore carried to the elevated roof of an ancient palace. He had to lay face down on a cushion so he could monitor the army from this ideal vantage point. The battle line of the Muslim army was at the foot of the wall of Qudays, a neighborhood in Al-Qadisiyyah. Sa'd ﷺ appointed Khalid bin Urfutah as his deputy to convey his commands to the forces.

Rustam had placed a detachment of cavalry to keep a watch on the bridge so that the Muslims did not cross it and carry out an attack from behind. The armies finally stood face to face. Rustam had no more excuses for delaying this decisive day.

Soul-Inspiring Spectacles of Remembrance of Allah and Prayer

The soldiers of Islam had also kept themselves fully prepared to face the enemy early in the morning, Sa'd bin Abi Waqqas ﷺ organized the troops and appointed various commanders. Under the guidance of Sayyidana Umar Faruq ﷺ, Sayyidana Salman Al-Farisi ﷺ was made the overall leader of the Muslim army.

The army also had memorizers and reciters of the Qur'an who were commanded to recite Surat Al-Anfāl (Surah 8: The Spoils of War). Their melodious recitation boosted the morale of the troops. Their eyes were relieved, hearts refreshed, and they experienced divine peace. The sequence of supplications continued throughout this time. When it was time to pray *Thuhr* or the noon prayer, the fighters stood in rows with some soldiers guarding them.

Sayyidana Sa'd bin Abi Waqqas ﷺ now issued guidance that the soldiers should continually recite *La Hawla wa Quwwata illa billah* (There is no power or strength except in Allah). He further instructed, "When you complete your noon prayer, I shall proclaim, 'Allah is Most Great' three times. When I say 'Allah is Most Great' the fourth time, then

attack the enemy. At this point it should be kept clearly in mind that Sa'd bin Abi Waqqas ﷺ had been unwell, but as a weathered general, he had been keeping a close watch on the army. He was exceedingly brave and lion-hearted. He had been trained by the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. He was one of the ten who had received glad tidings that they would certainly enter Paradise.

Prayer is obligatory for every Muslim, wherever he happens to be. He cares deeply about the *adhan* and congregational prayer, even on the battlefield.

Hagiographers have recorded that when Rustam descended on the region of Najaf, he sent a spy to the Muslim camp. The spy mixed with the Arabs in Al-Qadisiyyah, as if he were someone who had strayed from them. He saw them cleaning their teeth with the *siwak* or a toothbrush (made from the branches of a tree) before each prayer. He saw how they prayed and dispersed to their positions. The spy returned to Rustam and informed him about the Muslim way of life. Rustam asked him, "What food do they eat?" The spy said, "I stayed with them for one night. I did not see any one of them eating anything. They merely suck twigs when they go to sleep at night and before they get up in the morning."

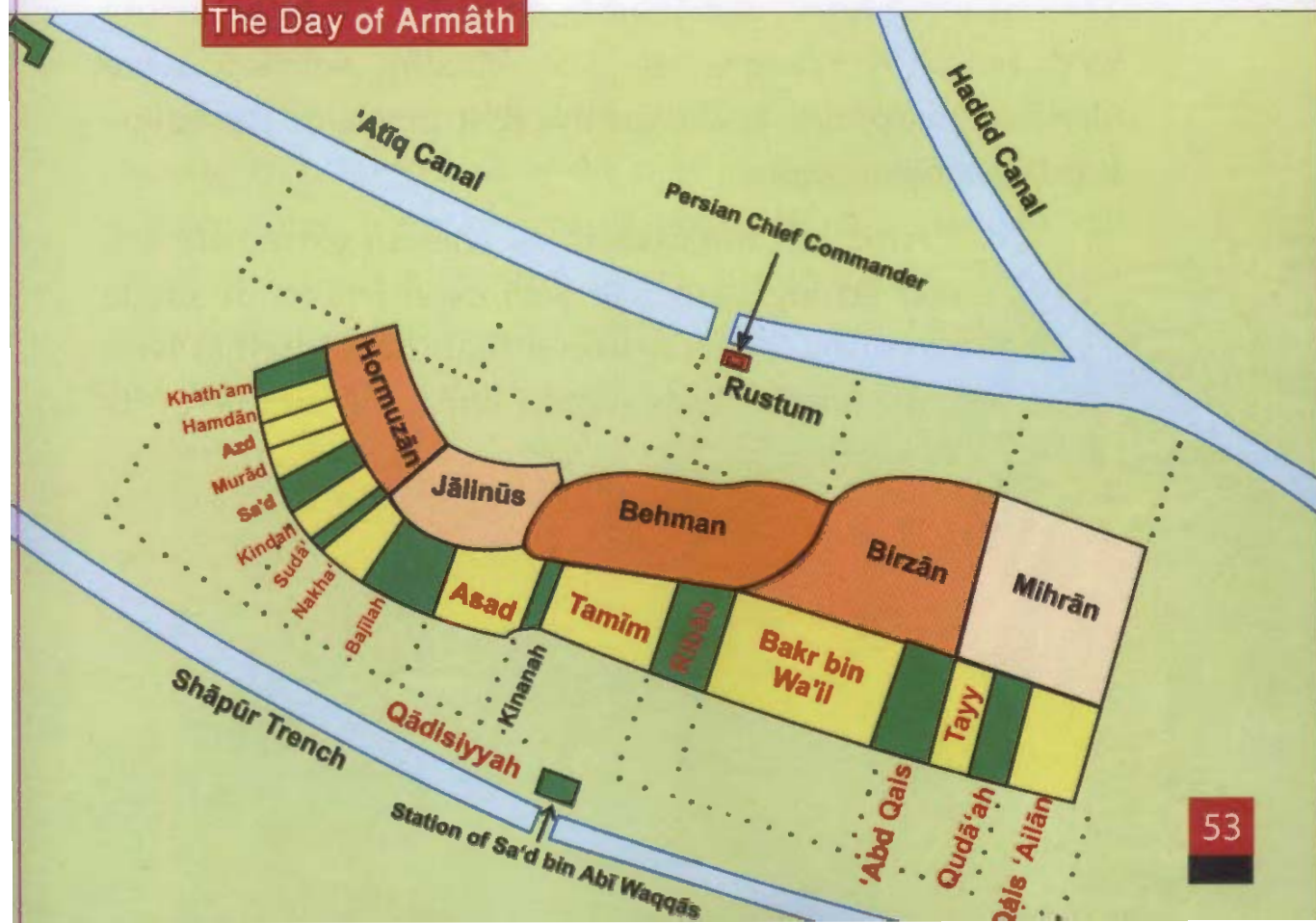
Rustam is Baffled by the *Adhan*

On the battlefield of Al-Qadisiyyah, Rustam was continually confounded and greatly distressed when he heard the *muezzin* calling out the *adhan*. While taking a stroll, he heard the *muezzin* call the Muslims to perform the dawn prayers. The whole army rose and began to prepare to pray. When he saw this, Rustam immediately called on the Iranians to mount their horses. When asked the reason for this, he said, "Don't you see that your enemy has been given the command to move against us?" His spy said, "They are moving to perform their prayer." Rustam then said to the spy in Persian, "In the morning I heard the voice of Umar."

When Rustam heard the *adhan* for *Thuhr*, he said, "Umar has perforated my liver." [History of Tabari]. He mentioned the name of Umar ﷺ because he believed this was the leader of the whole Muslim nation and the *muezzin* was just his representative.

The Day of Armâth

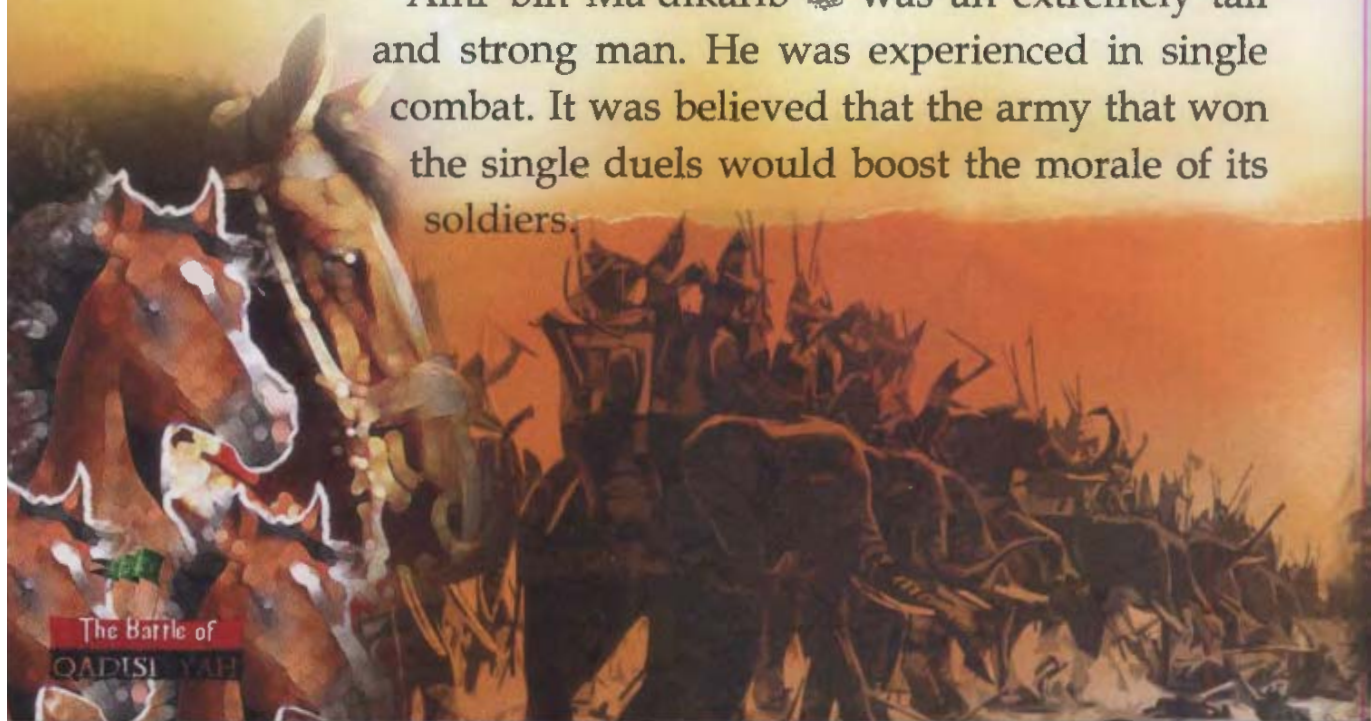
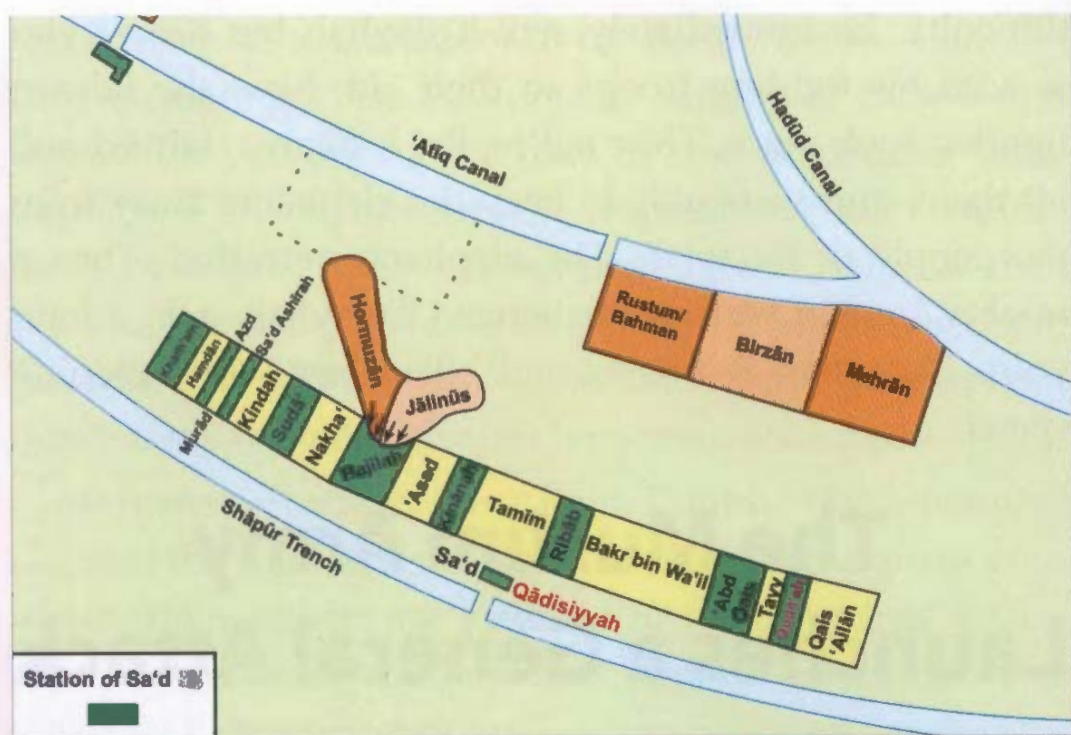
In accordance with the plan, Sa'd bin Abi Waqqas ﷺ raised the battle cry of *Allahu Akbar* or Allah is Most Great. A reciter was reciting Sūrah Al-Anfāl from the Glorious Qur'an. The fighters repeated, *Allahu Akbar* loudly. The sound of this cry rose up from one side of the army to the other. When Sa'd ﷺ pronounced the first *takbir* (to magnify Allah by saying *Allahu Akbar*), the troops got ready for battle. When he proclaimed "Allah is Most Great" the second time, they armed themselves. When Sa'd ﷺ proclaimed "Allah is Most Great" the third time, the horsemen encouraged the fighters to step forward and charge. When the *takbir*

The Day of Armâth

was proclaimed the fourth time, the battle began.

> "The fighters repeated, Allahu Akbar loudly. The sound of this cry rose up from one side of the army to the other."

Distinguished readers, I often wonder what sort of personalities these men possessed to respond to the *takbir* with such excitement and energy that it terrified the hearts of the enemy combatants!

The fighters of Islam then stepped forward for single combat with spears and swords. Glory be to Allah! Amr bin Ma'dikarib and Tulayhah bin Khuwaylid Al-Asadi demonstrated their well-known valor and courage and killed many Iranians. They also captured many more and brought them before Sa'd bin Abi Waqqas. The Muslim soldiers were obviously superior and won the first phase of the single combat confrontations.

Amr bin Ma'dikarib was an extremely tall and strong man. He was experienced in single combat. It was believed that the army that won the single duels would boost the morale of its soldiers.

Invasion of the Persians on the Column of Bajīlah (Qādisiyyah)

The General Attack of the Iranians

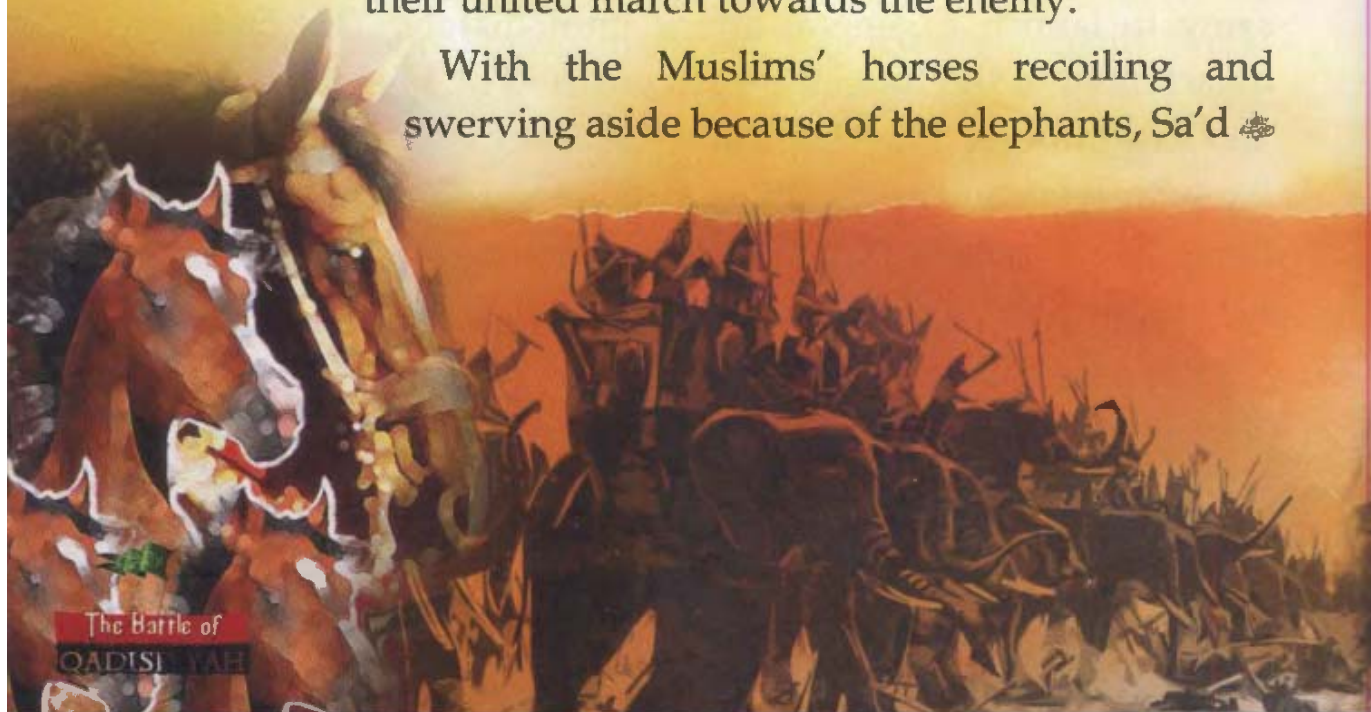
When Rustam observed that the Muslims were gaining an upper hand in the first phase of the battle and demonstrated a great deal of valor, he commanded his army to launch a general attack immediately. The first detachment of the Iranian army consisted of 13 elephants and 4,000 troops. They launched the attack on the tribe of Banu Bujaylah and on the division of the Muslim army with them. The presence of elephants in an army was something new to the Muslims.

When Sa'd ﷺ saw that the tribe of Bujaylah were in

difficulty, he immediately sent Tulayhah bin Khuwaylid ﷺ with his fighting troops to their aid. Now the fiercest fighting took place. They fell on the Iranians, stabbed and hit them, and were able to keep the elephants away from the people of Bujaylah. The elephants retreated. Then a mighty Iranian warrior challenged Tulayhah ؓ in a loud voice. Tulayhah ؓ turned and killed him with lightning speed.

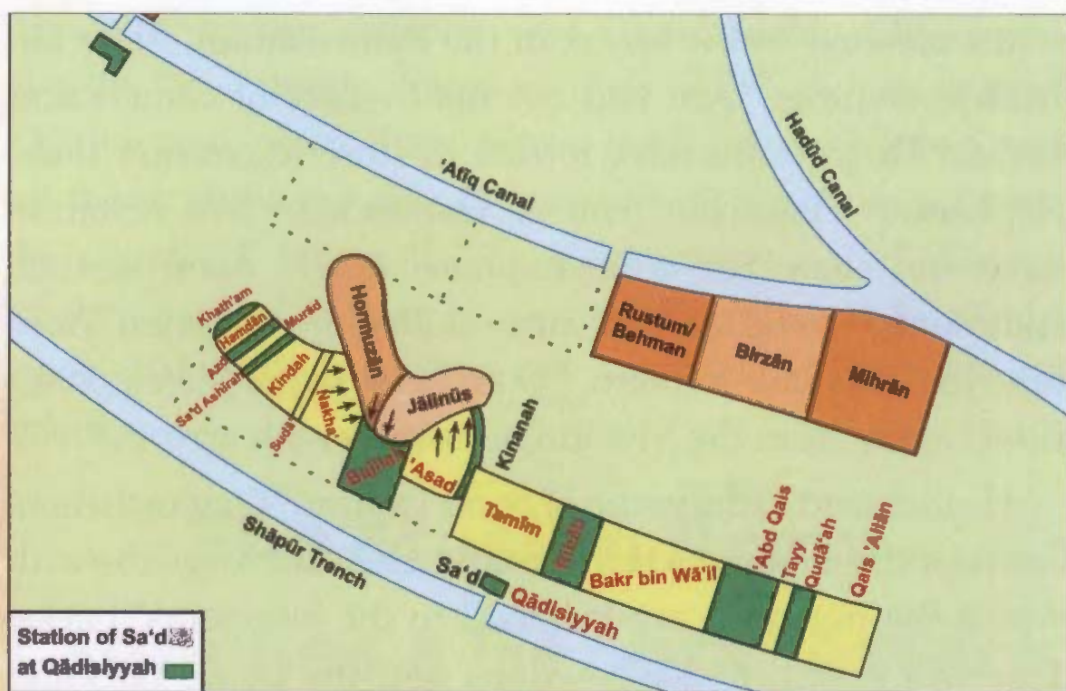
The Muslim Army Launches a General Attack

Now the elephants bore down on the Muslim lines. The huge beasts swayed to-and-fro, their howdahs, manned with soldiers and banners, were like moving castles. This frightened the Arab horses, which broke away at the frightful sight. The elephants attacked the wings, spreading panic all around, and the enemy, profiting from the confusion, pressed forward. The position was critical. The elephants moved in the direction of Bani Asad. Then Sa'd bin Abi Waqqas ؓ proclaimed the battle cry of "*Allahu Akbar*" for the fourth time, and the Muslim army began their united march towards the enemy.

With the Muslims' horses recoiling and swerving aside because of the elephants, Sa'd ؓ

sent a message to the leader of the Banu Tamim, Āsim bin Amr ﷺ, stating, "Are you not the owners of camels and horses? Do you not have a trick in store to counter these elephants?" Āsim bin Amr ﷺ responded, "We certainly have, by Allah. See what happens now!" Āsim ﷺ then summoned some archers and skilled swordsmen from his tribe, and said to them, "O archers! Drive the elephant riders away from the Muslim horsemen with arrows!"

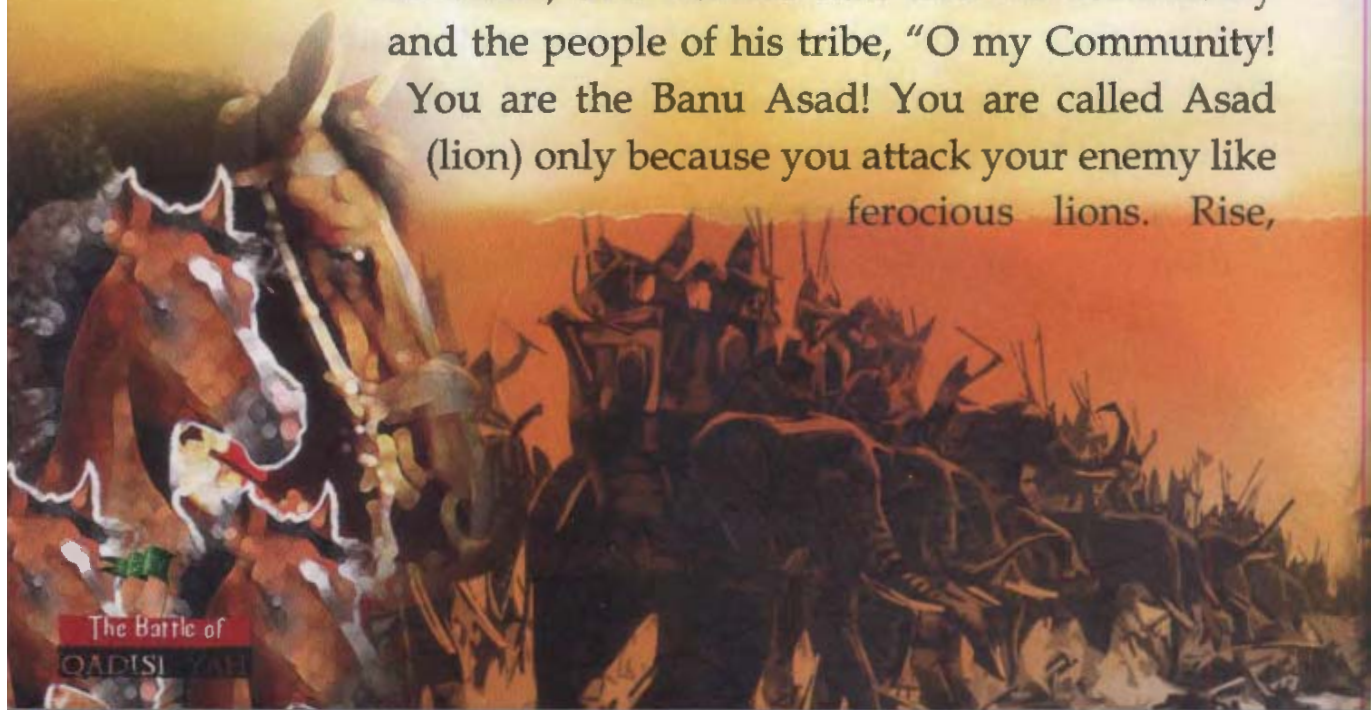
He then said to the youth of Banu Tamim, "O swordsmen! Get near the elephants from behind, and cut the girths with which the howdahs are fastened to the elephants' backs. This will result in the howdahs and the boxes crashing down with the enemy riders."

Heroic Deeds of the Banu Asad

The fiercest battle was fought around the Banu Asad. Āsim Tamimi ﷺ set out to defend them. The right and left wings of the Muslims had fallen into disarray. The young Muslim men had been targeting the elephants of the enemy. Āsim's men drew close to the elephants, grabbed their tails and ornaments hanging from their howdahs, and cut their girths. The elephants trumpeted intensely. On that day, all the Iranian elephants had their howdahs removed. The elephant drivers were killed and the Banu Asad was relieved. The Muslims pushed the Iranians back to their positions. They fought until sunset, and during a

Asad Tribe covering Bajīlah Tribe (Qādisiyyah-3)

part of the night, and then both sides withdrew. It was a very significant day for the Banu Asad. The Banu Tamim had fought under the leadership of their commander Āsim bin Amr ﷺ and had a splendid battle.

Tulayhah's Heroic Deeds

Tulayhah bin Khuwaylid ﷺ played a very significant role in saving the Banu Asad from the clutches of the enemy. Tulayhah ﷺ himself came from the Banu Asad. During the battle, this warrior had told his community and the people of his tribe, "O my Community! You are the Banu Asad! You are called Asad (lion) only because you attack your enemy like ferocious lions. Rise,

muster up the courage, gather your strength and pounce on the enemy. Charge the enemy fiercely and do not turn back! Attack and do not run away. Fall on your enemy like lions! May Allah help you! Launch a fierce attack on the enemy in the name of Allah."

What a battle this was. Comely young men stepped forward to ensure the supremacy of the Word of Allah. The speeches of the commanders cheered the hearts and minds of these youth; and instilled the spirit of bravery and valor in them. Tulayhah ﷺ himself was brave and fearless. The Banu Asad and Banu Tamim stole the thunder away from the other fighters, but they made supreme sacrifices for it.

The first day of the battle of Al-Qadisiyyah was called, "The Day of *Armâth*'. *Armâth* means mingling of two things. No one could have predicted who would win the battle on the first day. So since both victory and defeat had been present and mixed together, it was called 'The Day of *Armâth*'.

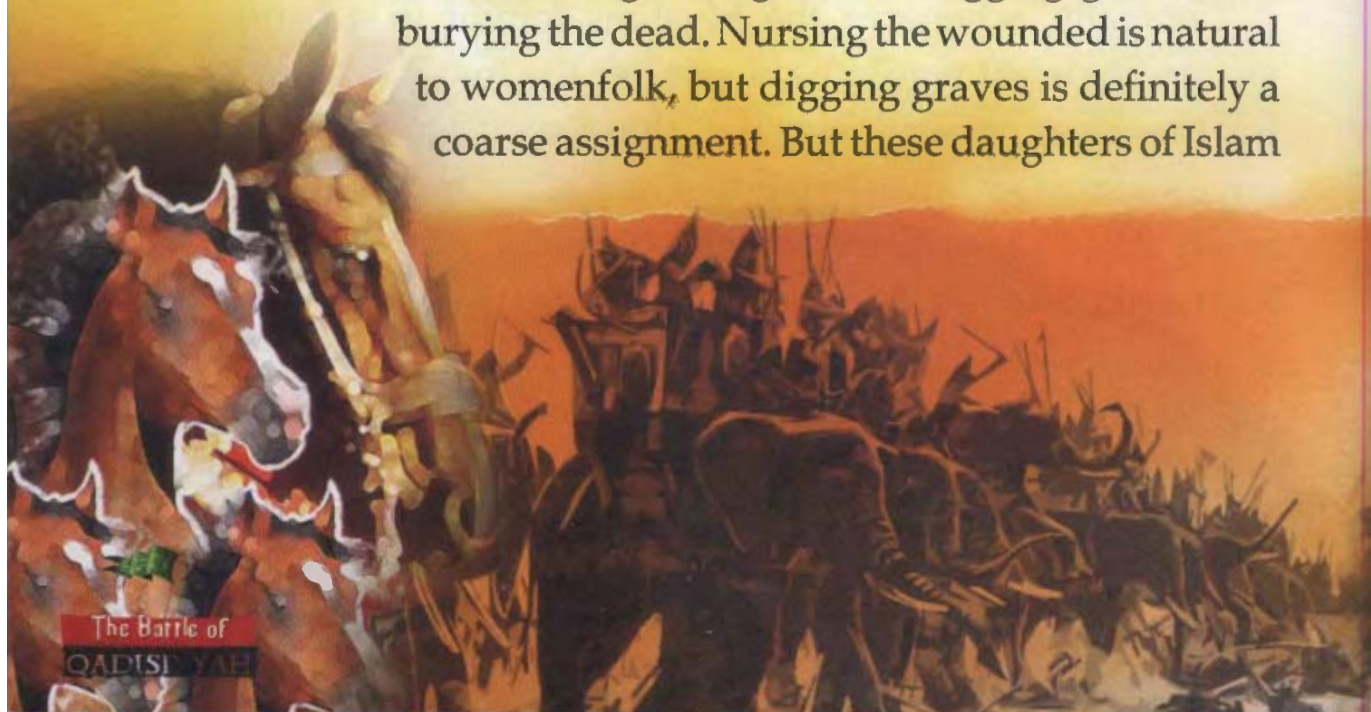
Losses Suffered by the Armies on the First Day

Generally, whenever the Muslims fought in a battle, victory or defeat would be clear after the first day's fight. But there was no result at sunset that day. It continued for three successive days. On the first day of the battle, known as the Day of *Armâth*, five hundred Muslim warriors were martyred and several wounded.

A little more than 400 martyrs came from the tribe of Banu Asad. The Iranians had relatively heavy losses. That day 2,000 of their soldiers were consigned to hellfire; and they had a substantially high number of wounded. When darkness fell, both armies retired to their camps for the night. No fighting took place during the night and so it was called 'The Night of Quietness' or *Laylat Al-Had'at,* which literally means 'The Night of Rest'.

The Muslim Martyrs and Wounded

Sa'd bin Abi Waqqas ﷺ put a group of men in charge of carrying the corpses of the martyrs and the wounded to Udhayb Al-Hijanāt, which was situated in the rear of the Muslim army, about two kilometers from the battlefield. The Muslim women of the fighters had been waiting there for them. Since the Muslim warriors had been participating in the campaign for several months, they had taken their spouses with them. This group of women ran the army's medical camp.

These women not only treated the wounded but they also had the grueling task of digging graves and burying the dead. Nursing the wounded is natural to womenfolk, but digging graves is definitely a coarse assignment. But these daughters of Islam

rose to the occasion. Their great faith and patience drove them to perform astonishing and historic feats. While burying the martyrs, they often had to bury their own sons, brothers and husbands. But their mountain-like lofty resolve, provided them with the strength to undergo such labor and hardships in fulfilling their duty.

In reality, they personified submission and contentment! Habib bin Jarir Ansari was in charge of this women's medical camp because he had considerable medical expertise.

"Their great faith and patience drove them to perform astonishing and historic feats. While burying the martyrs, they often had to bury their own sons, brothers and husbands."

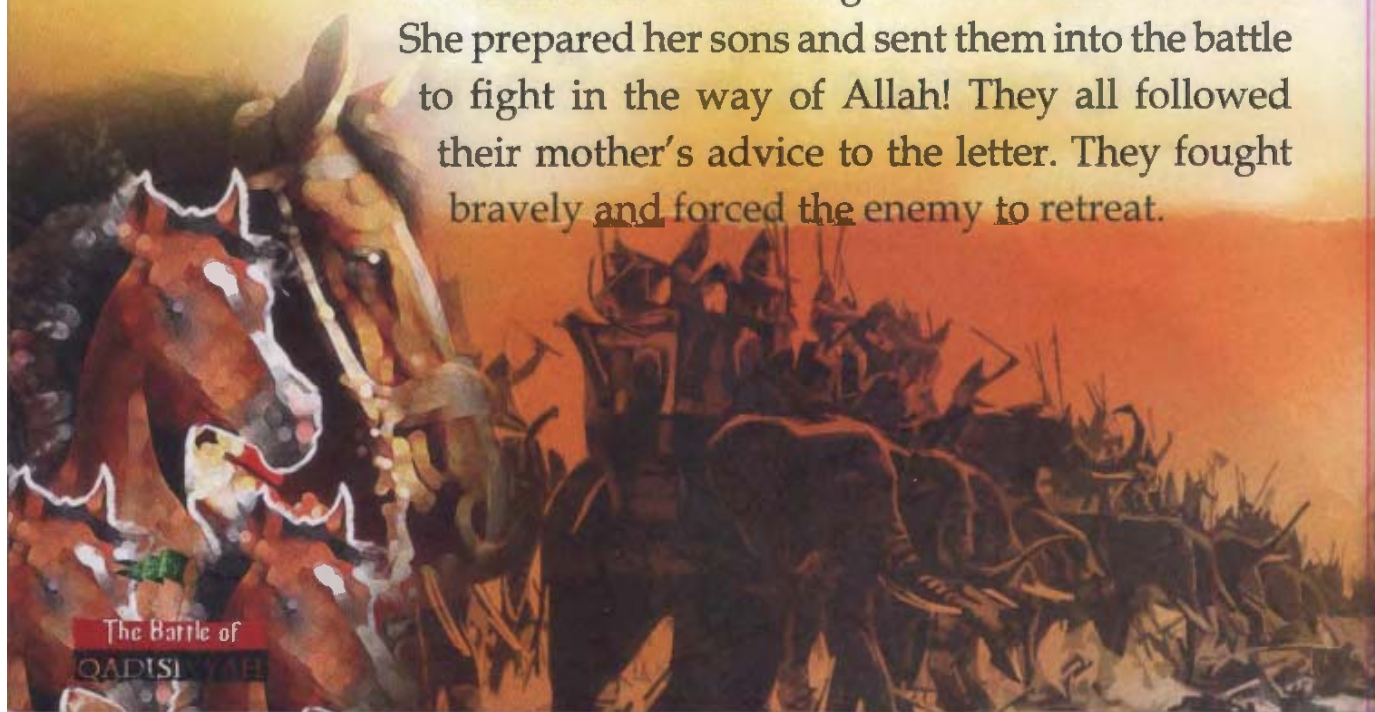
Khansa bint Amr رضي الله عنها Counsels her Sons

That day the women also played a crucial role in boosting the confidence of the Islamic army. Some people may not know the name Khansa رضي الله عنها! She belonged to the tribe of Banu Sulaym. This lady attained a status that should be a

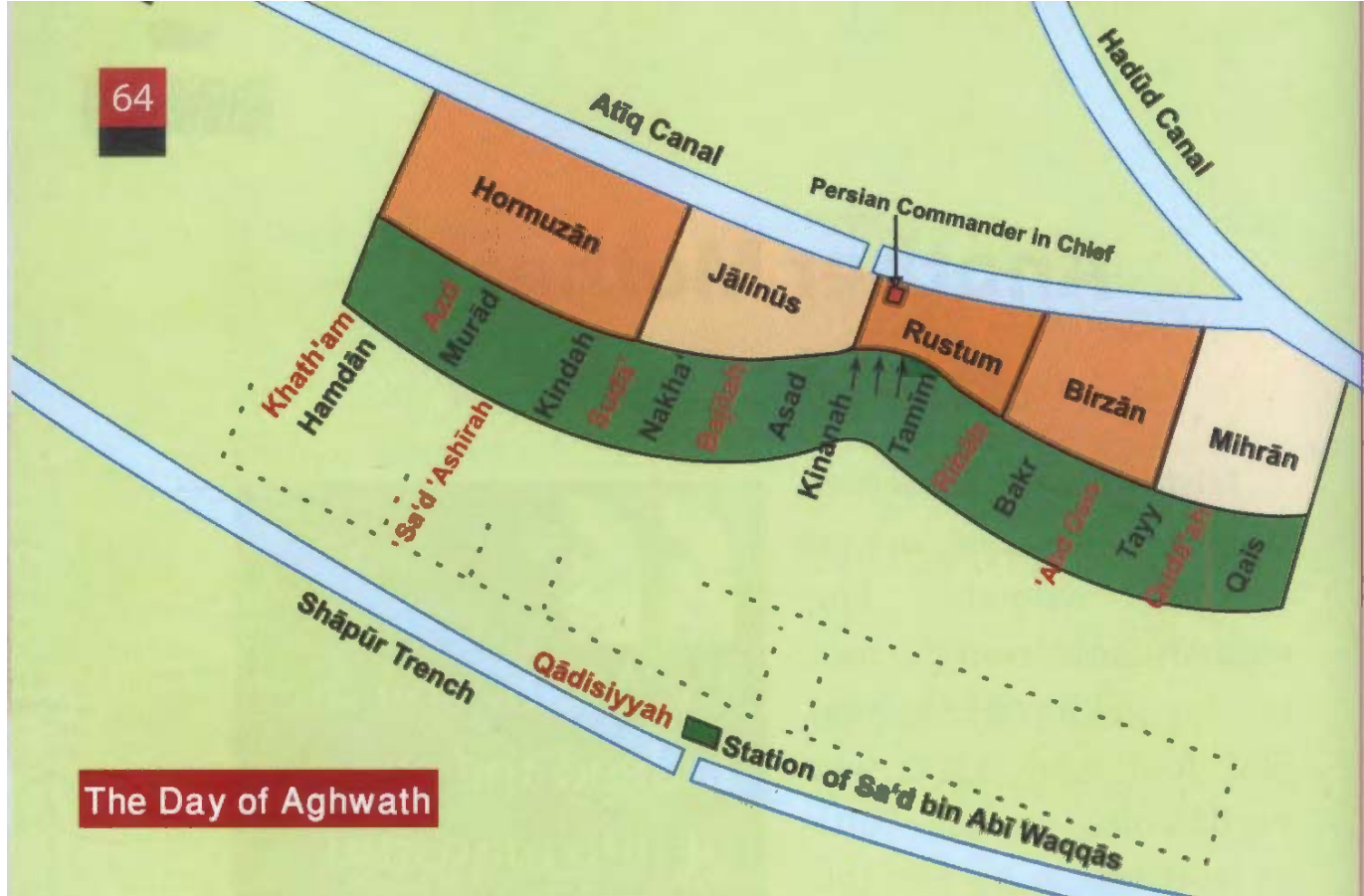
model for believing women. She was prepared to sacrifice her four sons for the cause of Islam. She was also a well-known poetess of the Arabs; and was very brave and bold.

"This lady attained a status that should be a model for believing women. She was prepared to sacrifice her four sons for the cause of Islam."

Khansa bint Amr's four brave sons were strong, comely young men, and experienced riders. They were prepared to lay down their lives for Islam in the battle of Al-Qadisiyyah. At the battlefield, she called them to her tent and said, "My sons! You have embraced Islam out of your own free will. You were not coerced into accepting this religion. Now it is obligatory on you to protect this religion. You know well that Allah has promised a great reward and recompense to the Muslim who strives in His path. Seek Allah's help against the enemy. Advance towards the adversary. When the battle goes up in flames, leap into it."

Khansa bint Amr ﷺ advised her sons at great length. I often reflect on what a magnificent mother she was! She prepared her sons and sent them into the battle to fight in the way of Allah! They all followed their mother's advice to the letter. They fought bravely and forced the enemy to retreat.

Another Mother's Heroic Deed

History has preserved similar utterances of yet another woman! This woman came from the tribe of An-Nakha of Yemen. She had four sons who participated in the battle of Al-Qadisiyyah. She told her sons, "By Allah, you are indeed the sons of one man and one woman! I have not betrayed your father, nor have I brought disgrace on your maternal uncle. Go forth and fight the battle from the beginning until the end; and harm the enemy as much as you can." The four sons replied with one voice, "Please supplicate for us." Thereupon they advanced quickly. When they left her, she raised her hands to the sky, and said, "O Allah! Protect my sons." After acquitting themselves well in the battle, they returned to her without any injuries.

> "By Allah, you are indeed the sons of one man and one woman! Go forth and fight the battle from the beginning until the end; and harm the enemy as much as you can."

The Day of Aghwath

The Day of Aghwâth

The second day of the Battle of Al-Qadisiyyah was called "The Day of *Aghwāth*" because on that day the Muslims received help from Syria. The Arabic term *Ghawth* denotes help. *Aghwāth* is plural. Damascus had been conquered one month before the Battle of Al-Qadisiyyah when the Muslims won a decisive victory over the Romans in the Battle of Yarmūk.

Having defeated the Romans, a division of the Syrian

army joined the Muslim forces at Al-Qadisiyyah. The morning was occupied with the wounded and the dead, and the fighting recommenced later in the day. Then the first column of the contingent sent from Syria came into view. The army consisted of the people of Banu Tamim who were brave and extremely warlike. This army consisted of 6,000 soldiers. It was led by the famous Muslim general Qa'qa bin Amr ؓ. He was from the tribe of Tamim and a Companion of the Prophet ﷺ. He had participated in the Battle of Yarmūk and had a reputation for extraordinary bravery. In fact, Umar bin Al-Khattab ؓ had ordered Abu Ubaydah ؓ, the governor of Syria, to divert a section of the army of Banu Tamim to Al-Qadisiyyah to help the Muslims. So the brave and experienced young men of the Banu Tamim became part of the Islamic army at Al-Qadisiyyah in Iraq.

"This army consisted of 6,000 soldiers. It was led by the famous Muslim general Qa'qa bin Amr ؓ. He was from the tribe of Tamim and a Companion of the Prophet ﷺ."

This second day of the battle brought good tidings and successes. The fact was that in those days, from the point of view of military capability and war strategies, the Arabs enjoyed superiority over other communities.

Swordsmanship was part of their nature and in their society, status was determined according to military and poetic ability. They had the skills and knowledge to fight battles. Whether it was individual or general combat, the Arabs had the expertise to rise to the occasion.

Abu Bakr's Opinion of Sayyidana Qa'qa

Abu Bakr ﷺ apparently said about Qa'qa, "An army that has men like Qa'qa ﷺ cannot be defeated." The contingent which Sayyidana Abu Ubaydah ﷺ had sent from Syria to help Muslim fighters in Al-Qadisiyyah was commanded by Hashim bin Utbah bin Abi Waqqas ﷺ. Hashim was the nephew of Sa'd bin Abi Waqqas ﷺ. Hashim ﷺ placed Qa'qa bin Amr ﷺ in charge of the vanguard, which consisted of one thousand fighters.

Qa'qa ﷺ Joins the Muslim Army in Unique Way

Look at the distinctive way Qa'qa ﷺ joined the army in Al-Qadisiyyah with his detachment. He planned this strategy to lift the confidence of the troops. Qa'qa ﷺ marched from Syria quickly, without stopping, and reached the Muslims at Al-Qadisiyyah on the morning of the Day of *Aghwāth.*

He instructed his men, of about 1,000 soldiers, to divide themselves into 10 groups of 100 soldiers each. He further divided each of these 10 parts into groups of 10. So a detachment of 1,000 warriors formed into 100 units of fighters. This was a unique military trick used by Qa'qa ﷺ to boost the morale of the Muslims. He skilfully magnified his force in the eyes of both friend and foe.

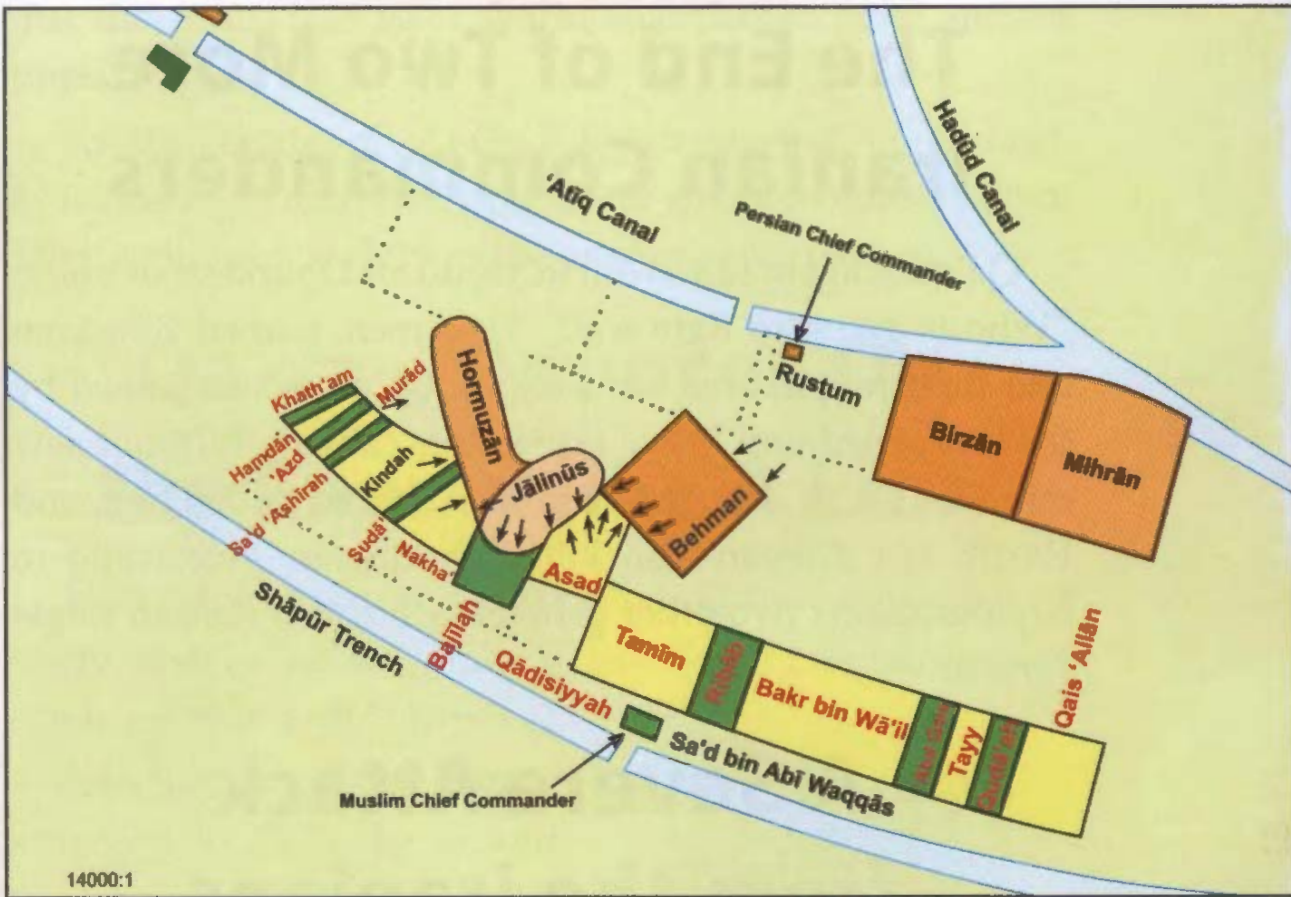
"A contingent of one thousand soldiers is not regarded as a large reinforcement for an army of 30,000, but the novel idea to which Allah guided Qa'qa ﷺ worked and strengthened the resolve of the Muslims."

He arranged his units of 10 a little distance behind the other. Every time one such unit moved out of sight, another followed in its wake. Qa'qa ﷺ reached the Muslims fighting at Al-Qadisiyyah with a group before the rest of his troops. He greeted Sa'd ﷺ and his companions and said, "O Muslims, I have come to you with men of valour." As each squadron came up, it advanced with all the appearance of a fresh and independent force across the plain in sight of both armies, and proclaimed the *takbir*, which was answered by the same ringing cheer, *Allahu Akbar*, from the Muslim lines. This strategy succeeded in

elevating the morale of the Muslim soldiers.

If we ponder over it, a contingent of one thousand soldiers is not regarded as a large reinforcement for an army of 30,000, but the novel idea to which Allah guided Qa'qa ﷺ worked and strengthened the resolve of the Muslims. As soon as a unit of 10 soldiers merged with the standing Muslim army, another unit would appear calling out the *takbir*, which was answered with the same resounding delight. The arrival of one squadron after the other gave the Muslims the impression that a very large reinforcement had reached them. This lifted the confidence of the army and struck terror into the heart of the enemy. When the additional contingent of the Syrian army consisting of 5,000 solders joined the Muslim army at Al-Qadisiyyah, the confidence of the Muslims knew no bounds!

The Duel between Bahman Jâdhawayhi and Qa'qa Bin Amr ﷺ

Qa'qa ﷺ was a fine orator. He began to address the army, "O men! Rally around me. Fight as I fight." He then marched in the direction of the enemy and challenged them in a loud voice, "Who is going to fight me?" Bahman Jādhawaihi, an eminent Iranian general emerged from the enemy army to face him. Qa'qa ﷺ asked him, "Who are you?" He said, "I am Bahman Jādwayhi." Qa'qa ﷺ

Behman Jadawaih attacks Banū 'Asad (Qādisiyyah-4)

recognized his foe and remembered that this general had martyred a number of Muslim warriors. Qa'qa ﷺ cried out, "The day of revenge has arrived!" Bahman was also brave, but Qa'qa's words cast terror into his heart.

It should be remembered that Abu Bakr As-Siddiq ﷺ once paid homage to Qa'qa ﷺ by saying, "The voice of Qa'qa in an army is better than a thousand troops."

Allah filled the hearts of the enemy with dread. Qa'qa ﷺ killed his opponent in no time. Bahman had been the Commander of an army of 20,000 soldiers. His fall unnerved the Iranians and raised the morale of the Muslims.

The End of Two More Iranian Commanders

Qa'qa ﷺ again called out in a loud and thunderous voice, "Who is going to fight me?" Two men, named Bayrūzan and Binduwan, came out to fight. Qa'qa ﷺ was joined by the renowned and brave Hārith bin Zabyan. Within a few minutes, Qa'qa ﷺ struck Bayrūzan and beheaded him, and Hārith bin Zabyan also killed Binduwan. According to hagiographers two other generals were also slain in single combat.

A Severe Attack from the Iranians

The heart of the Persians sank when they saw their heroes slain by Qa'qa ﷺ and his companion. In a panic, they decided on a new plan. They reorganized their troops and launched a frontal attack on the Muslims. The Muslims were well aware of their tricks and were prepared for every eventuality. When the encounter started, Qa'qa ﷺ instructed the Muslim fighters in a loud voice, "O Muslims! Put your enemy to the sword, because men are killed by the sword." The Muslim fighters started passing this advice to one another. Arabs were skilled swordsmen. This is not to say that the Iranians were unfamiliar with this skill, but when we read accounts of the fairs held at Ukaz, we realize

that the Arabs had been skilful swordsmen from ancient times.

So the Battle of Al-Qadisiyyah started in earnest. Muslims were martyred and many enemy soldiers killed. They continued to fight as the evening approached.

Qa'qa ﷺ Pounces On the Enemy like A Lion

Historians have recorded that Qa'qa ﷺ launched thirty attacks on the enemy and fought a number of duels on that day. Whenever a detachment of the enemy emerged to fight, he would launch a lightning-quick attack and return victorious! Qa'qa ﷺ was known for poems in which he described his military exploits. In one poem, he said, "I throw the enemy into disorder by my ceaseless raids; I stab and hit the target well with my spear, causing the blood to flow."

"After the day's unceasing conflict, the spirit of the Iranians had waned, in sharp contrast to the growing confidence of the Muslim warriors."

Qa'qa ﷺ killed several people on the Day of *Aghwāth*

in his attacks. Whenever he launched an attack, he killed a man; the last being Buzurgmihr at Hamadhāni. The fighting continued until midnight but no army could win a decisive victory.

The Muslims had prepared a comprehensive and detailed strategic plan for the battle. They energized their ranks continually with fresh reinforcements. They had made suitable arrangements for a ready supply of food and weapons. This resulted in boosting the morale of the soldiers, enabling them to perform astonishing feats of bravery in the battle.

The Muslim commander had posted military squadrons at critical positions and changed their positions when needed. He kept a close eye on every part of the battlefield. He had relevant information on his own troops and detailed intelligence reports on the strength and movement of the enemy.

The bodies of the martyred soldiers and the wounded were sent to the makeshift medical camp set up by the women. The wounded received treatment and meals at the camp.

There was intense fighting throughout the day. After the day's unceasing conflict, the spirit of the Iranians had waned, in sharp contrast to the growing confidence of the Muslim warriors.

The Astonishing Bravery of Ilbâ

At one stage a battle-thirsty and brave Iranian warrior issued a challenge to the Muslim soldiers from the Bakr bin Wail tribe saying, "Who is going to fight me?" Ilbā bin Jahsh from the tribe of Ijli rose to face him. Both were very brave. Ilbā struck the Iranian fighter with his sword and pierced his lungs. But the Iranian warrior stepped forward and struck Ilbā with his sword and disembowelled him. Both fell to the ground. The Iranian died immediately. Ilbā, with his intestines spilling out, could not rise. He tried to put his bowels back into his body, but was unable to do so. Ilbā then called out to a Muslim fighter, "O please help me with my belly." The Muslim put his intestines back into his body, and Ilbā held the wound together with his hands and rushed towards the Iranian lines, without turning back to look at the Muslims. He died twenty five or thirty meters from the place where he had been struck.

"Martyrdom is the ambition and aspiration of a believer, not obtaining booty or conquering land."

This is called bravery. What a spectacle! According to historians,

his last words were, "I hope I shall receive recompense for this from my Sustainer. I was one of those who fought well. Martyrdom is the ambition and aspiration of a believer, not obtaining booty or conquering land."

This incident on the second day of the Battle of Qadisiyyah demonstrated the matchless valour and heroism of the Muslims! It is my desire that the youths of my community take stock of these golden days. They should ponder and recall how mighty we once were; how courageous and brave our pious predecessors were!

A'raf bin A'lam's Heroic Deeds

When another Iranian warrior stepped forward and proclaimed, "Who is going to fight me?" A'raf bin A'lam Uqayli rose up and killed him in a couple of minutes. A'raf also killed another soldier who challenged him. Then an Iranian detachment surrounded him, threw him down, and seized his sword which had dropped to the ground. At that critical moment, without a weapon, A'raf picked up fistfuls of dust and threw this into the eyes of his foes. With the enemy temporarily blinded, he quickly returned to his companions!

The Spectacular Sacrifice of Sayyidah Khansa رضي الله عنها

The real name of Khansa رضي الله عنها was Tamadhur bint Amir Bin Sharid. As we have mentioned before, she belonged to the tribe of Banu Sulaym and had four sons she had lovingly sent into battle.

All four brave youths went to fight the enemy with great zeal and excitement. They recited verses of war poems to encourage each another. One brother said, "Do you remember the clear advice our well-wishing old mother gave us last night? Now plunge into the battle." He then fought bravely and was martyred. They same thing happened to the second and third brothers.

Before the fourth son was martyred, he recited, "I will not be worthy of being called the son of Khansa, Akhram or of our great grandfather Amr with the glowing forehead if I do not penetrate the Iranian army; if I do not march forth riding my colossal slit-eared horse, either for swift victory and spoils or martyrdom in this blessed path."

When Khansa رضي الله عنها heard that her four sons had died, she did not wail or moan, but said, "All thanks and praise is for Allah who honoured me with martyred sons. I hope that Allah Most High grants us Paradise so we can meet there."

A Brilliant Strategy of the Muslim Army

It has previously been described how on the first day of the battle, the enemy's elephants had caused a great deal of damage to the Muslim army. The sight of these huge animals had frightened the Arab horses and driven them away.

On the second day of the battle, Qa'qa ﷺ met with his uncle's sons to plan an effective strategy to trick the enemy. They mounted huge litters on the back of the camels and covered the camels' heads with black veils. In this way the camels looked quite frightening and appeared to be huge elephants. When the camels advanced towards the enemy cavalry, their horses took fright and fled. This afforded the Muslims a golden opportunity. Qa'qa ﷺ ordered his companions to attack the fleeing Iranian horsemen between the two battle lines. So on the Day of *Aghwâth*, the Muslims cut down their adversaries like carrots and radishes. This was the same thing that the Iranians did to the Muslims on the Day of *Armāth*. When the other commanders of the Muslim troops saw the strategy of Qa'qa ﷺ, they followed his example.

According to historians, on the Day of *Aghwāth*, the Iranians suffered more than the Muslims had suffered on the Day of *Armāth*. On the second day, the day of

Aghwāth, the fighting continued until midnight. The night of *Aghwāth* was called *Laylatus Sawād* or the Night of Blackness. When the fighting abated, the Muslims immediately began to bury their martyrs. The wounded were carried to Udhayb where they were treated by the women at the makeshift hospital.

"They mounted huge litters on the back of the camels and covered the camels' heads with black veils. In this way the camels looked quite frightening and appeared to be huge elephants."

The Matchless Heroism of Abu Mihjan Thaqafi ﷺ

An account of the second day of the battle cannot be complete without mentioning the exploits of Abu Mihjan ﷺ and the sparkling wisdom of an eminent Muslim woman.

Abu Mihjan's name was Abdullah bin Habib from the renowned tribe of Banu Thaqif of At-Tāif. Besides being a fine poet, he was extremely brave and fearless. He was a man of the battlefield and had an intense desire to be martyred. Before the advent of Islam, wine was endemic in the lives of Arabs. The poets, therefore, used to eulogize wine and grapes in their poetry. Sayyidana Sa'd bin Abi Waqqas ﷺ had imprisoned and fettered Abu Mihjan ﷺ in the palace for reciting poetry praising wine and grapes on the battlefield of Al-Qadisiyyah.

When the battle of Al-Qadisiyyah began and intensified that night, and when he heard the clanking of swords and the noise of fighting rising from the battlefield, Abu Mihjan ﷺ was seized with an irrepressible urge to join the battle. In the evening, he went up to Sa'd bin Abu Waqqas ﷺ and asked his forgiveness, but Sa'd ﷺ repelled him and sent him back. Then he went to Salma

bint Khasafah, the wife of Sa'd ﷺ, and said, "O Salma, O daughter of Khasafah! Will you do me a favour?" She asked, "What is it?" He said, "Set me free and lend me Al-Balqa." Al-Balqa was the horse that belonged to Sa'd bin Abi Waqqas ﷺ. Abu Mihjan ﷺ continued, "I want to participate in the battle. By Allah, if He keeps me safe, I shall return to you and put my feet back in chains. If I'm martyred, then forgive me." Salma said, "Why would I do that?" Abu Mihjan ﷺ began to drag his shackled feet again, and started reciting,

"It is sad enough that the horsemen gallop with spears, while I am left tied up, with fetters on. If I stand up, iron chains hurt and the doors are shut before me, rendering the caller's voice out of earshot. In the past I used to be a rich man, and I had brothers. Now they have left me alone, and I have no brother. By Allah, I have taken an oath, which I shall not break. If I am set

> That night he fought the enemy in a marvellous manner. The Muslims did not recognize Abu Mihjan ﷺ because it was dark, but expressed admiration for his bravery and skill.

free, I shall not deceive the lady."

Salma retired for a while. She performed the *Salatul Istikhara* or the prayer for guidance and asked Allah to show her the way. She hesitated before setting him free and thought that the Muslims needed valiant men. She knew Abu Mihjan ﷺ was brave and fearless. He often recited battle poetry. And he regretted his affection for wine. Salma was no ordinary woman. She was once the wife of the famous commander of the campaign of Iraq, Muthanna bin Harithah. After his martyrdom, she had married Sa'd bin Abi Waqqas ﷺ. She took the momentous decision to free Abu Mihjan ﷺ. She went to him and said, "I asked Allah for guidance, and I am satisfied with your oath." So she set him free and returned to her house. Sa'd ﷺ was not well. He was not able to ride or move freely because he was suffering from boils. He had to lay face down with a pillow under his chest. From the palace where he lay, he watched the Muslim fighters and sent written commands to Khalid bin Urfutah who was located in a lower place. Sa'd's horse Al-Balqa was behind the palace gate.

Abu Mihjan ﷺ was now free. He led the horse out through the fort gate, which was near a trench, mounted it, and moved slowly toward the enemy. When he was opposite the right wing of the Muslims, he proclaimed "*Allahu Akbar*" (Allah is Great); and attacked the left

wing of the Iranians swinging his spear and weapons. Historians have pointed out that he rode the horse saddled. Some narrators, however, say the horse was unsaddled. Abu Mihjan ﷺ then returned behind the Muslim lines, moved to the left wing, proclaimed "*Allahu Akbar,*" and attacked the right of the Iranians, wreaking havoc with his spear and other weapons. Then he went behind the Muslim army and charged at the heart of the enemy troops. That night he fought the enemy in a marvellous manner. The Muslims did not recognize Abu Mihjan ﷺ because it was dark, but expressed admiration for his bravery and skill.

Sa'd ﷺ, who was watching the Muslim troops from his vantage point on the fort's rampart, said, "By Allah, if Abu Mihjan were not in prison, I could swear it was him and that was my horse Al-Balqa." Some people said, "It appears as if an angel has descended from the skies to support us." Rumours started circulating about this mysterious warrior.

Abu Mihjan ﷺ continued performing marvels of courage and valour deep into the night. At midnight the Iranians and the Muslims disengaged and pulled back to their camps. Abu Mihjan ﷺ returned to the castle and entered it at the same point he had left. Fulfilling his promise and satisfied with his exploits, the hero chained himself again.

Abu Mihjan's Release is Secured

Salma had observed Abu Mihjan's gallant performance. He had inflicted severe damage on the enemy, and true to his promise, returned to his cell and chained his feet again. She said to herself, "The Muslims need a brave and gallant person with such selfless courage. He should not be kept in chains at this critical time."

Sayyida Salma went to Abu Mihjan ﷺ and asked him, "O Abu Mihjan, why did Sa'd imprison you?" He said, "By Allah, he did not imprison me for a prohibited thing that I ate or drank. But before the advent of Islam, I was fascinated with wine. Because I am a poet, poetry creeps onto my tongue, and sometimes it reaches my lips. I say whatever comes to my lips and that gets me into trouble. I once recited a few poetic verses praising wine. I had said, 'Bury me when I die by the roots of the vine, the moisture thereof will distil into my bones; bury me not in the desert, for then I fear that no more again shall I taste the flavour of the grape.' When Sa'd ﷺ learned about these verses of mine, he imprisoned me."

Salma then went to her husband and told him what had passed between herself and Abu Mihjan ﷺ. Sa'd ﷺ immediately summoned him, had his fetters removed

and released him, "I shall not hold you to account for anything unless you actually do it." Abu Mihjan ﷺ then swore an oath in the name of Allah and promised that he would never respond to his tongue's desire to describe reprehensible things.

Tulayhah Al-Asadi's Clever Tactic

The high morale of the Muslims and their intense desire to fight for the sake of Allah, was revealed by another incident during the campaign of Al-Qadisiyyah. This involved Tulayhah bin Khuwaylid Al-Asadi ﷺ who once apostatized after embracing Islam; and who had even claimed to be a prophet. He later repented and became a true believer. He was an extremely brave man.

On the third day of the battle, the fighting intensified and continued far into the night. Suddenly, Tulayhah's deep voice was heard from the rear of the enemy like a bolt out of the blue. He was calling out to his companions, saying, "I'm here!" The Iranians were frightened out of their wits when they heard this voice from their rear. The Muslims were bewildered because they did not know how Tulayhah ﷺ managed to get to the rear of the Iranian army. To investigate the matter and solve this puzzle the two armies stopped fighting for a while. The soldiers were amazed and perplexed.

Tulayhah's Tactic Proves Beneficial

When the battle stopped, the Muslims turned the situation to their advantage, reorganized their ranks and then prepared to attack with a new strategy. The fighting on that day continued deep into the night. This is what Tulayhah ﷺ wanted. He wanted to boost the morale of the Muslims troops. He wanted the Muslim soldiers to realize that the enemy was spineless and that it was not that difficult to confront them. In battle, every kind of strategy is brought into play. The army that wins the war of nerves can often ensure total victory. Tulayhah's strategy of reaching the rear of the enemy army and returning to his camp unscathed had unnerved the enemy soldiers. This was another heroic deed that helped the Muslims win the battle.

A Soldier's Breath-Taking, Compelling Speech

As the battle raged on the second day, a brave and eloquent soldier, Qays bin Makshuh ﷺ, addressed his fellow fighters and reminded them of the prophecy of

the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, made during the Battle of the Trench, that the Muslims would conquer Iran. Qays ؓ was a powerful orator. Orators often ignite fervour with their words during battles. In this regard, the Prophet ﷺ said, "Verily there is a kind of eloquence that is an enchantment."

Qays bin Makshuh ؓ, who was standing with others next to him, said, "O Arabs! Allah has favoured you with Islam. He has honoured you with Muhammad, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. By the Grace of Allah, you have become brethren, though you had been attacking each other like lions, and violently grabbing each other like wolves." Reminding them of the prophecy of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, he said, "Help Allah's religion so that He helps you! He has already fulfilled His promise to give your brethren victory over Syria, and subdued its red palaces and red castles. Remain absolutely certain that now the prophecy of the conquest of Iran will soon be fulfilled."

Qays' speech enhanced the confidence of the fighters, and they began to attack their enemy with renewed ardour and force.

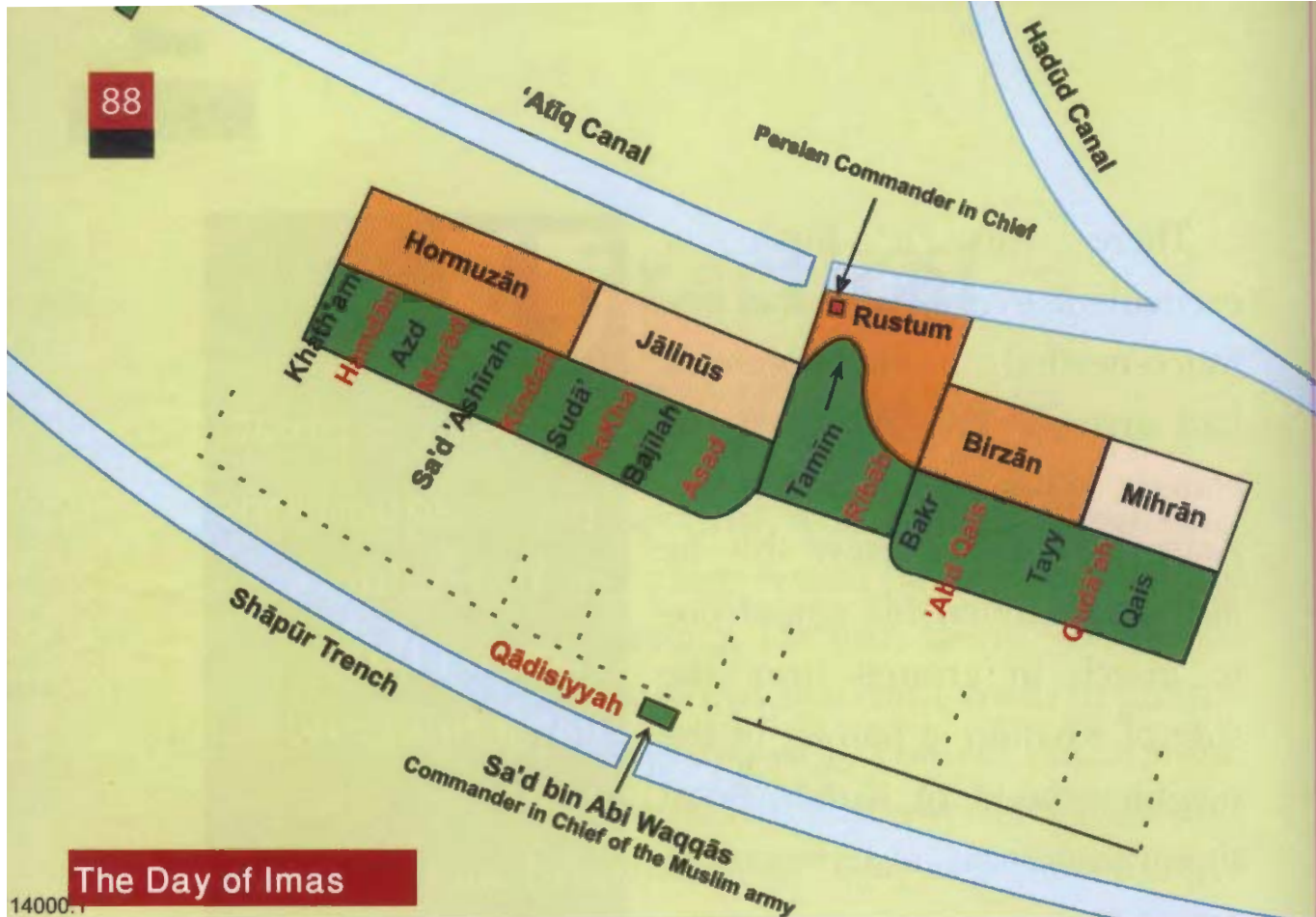
There was no fighting that night. Soldiers on both sides were exhausted and retired to their respective camps to rest. But Qa'qa ؓ did not go to bed. He was engrossed in shaping a great military strategy. Qa'qa ؓ knew that the strength of the Muslim army was small in comparison with the army of the Iranians. There was, therefore, a dire need to raise the morale of the Muslim soldiers. After much thought, he eventually arrived at a decision.

A Practical Military Move

Qa'qa ﷺ spent almost the whole night dispatching his companions to the place where he had parted from them the previous evening. He told them, "When the sun rises, enter the battlefield marching forth in groups of 100 each. When one group of 100 moves out of sight, let another group follow it. This will revive the hope and confidence of the Muslim army." They acted accordingly and no one noticed it. When the sun rose the next morning, Qa'qa ﷺ was anxiously looking out for the horsemen. When their manes appeared, he proclaimed "*Allahu Akbar*'. The troops repeated the battle cry and thought reinforcements had arrived. Now squadron after squadron came up, with all the appearance of fresh reinforcements and proclaimed, "*Allahu Akbar*", which was answered by the same ringing cheer from the Muslim lines. The spirit of the army rose and the hearts of the Iranians sank. There was great joy as squadrons of 100 fighters entered the battlefield one after the other and merged with the Muslim army. The battlefield echoed with loud shouts of *takbir*!

There was a flush of excitement everywhere that the much-needed reinforcements had arrived. The fighters were elated. When Qa'qa's brother, Āsim bin Amr ﷺ, saw this he also commanded his squadrons to march in groups from the side of Khaffān, a hamlet in the neighbourhood of Kufah. Soon these squadrons also began to arrive.

> "There was great joy as squadrons of 100 fighters entered the battlefield one after the other and merged with the Muslim army."

Meanwhile, Hāshim bin Utbah ﷺ arrived with his 700 fighters. The Muslims informed him of Qa'qa's tactics and the events over the previous two days. Hāshim ﷺ then arranged his men into groups of seventy and when the last of Qa'qa's troops arrived, he sent forth his groups of fighters. In this way, the spirit of the Islamic army was raised and they found themselves fully prepared to fight the enemy. It was an army that also trusted and relied on their Lord. They would only bow to Him and only seek His help to gain victory.

The Day of Imâs

The third day of the battle of Al-Qadisiyyah is historically called the Day of *Imâs*. *Ims* lexically denotes total darkness. This was probably because the hoofs of the horses of the two armies raised so much dust that it became almost pitch dark.

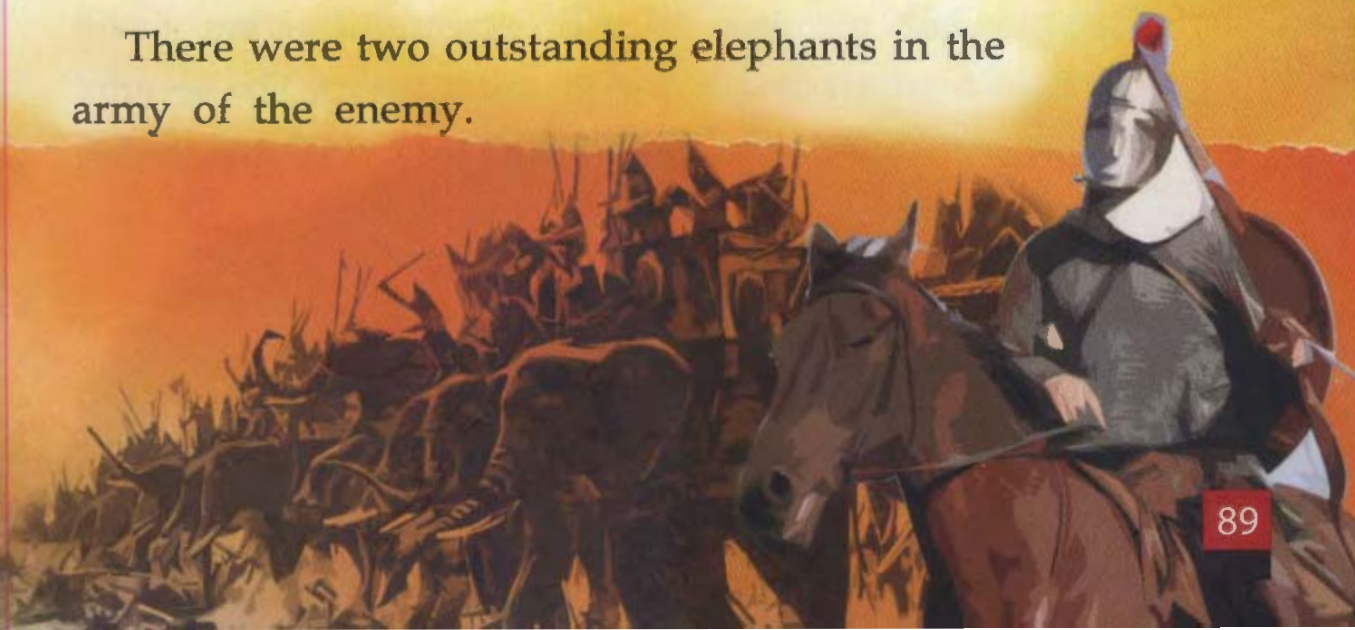
The Iranians had planned a new strategy. They had put the litters of their elephants back in place. This time their elephant took the field accompanied by infantrymen, who protected them against their girths being cut again.

The infantrymen were, in turn, shielded by horsemen. The elephants moved forward in this manner and this strategy placed extreme pressure on the Muslims. It was not easy to deal with these elephants.

The elephants spread consternation in every direction they advanced. The enemy, profiting from the confusion, pressed forward and the Muslims found it difficult to stand their ground. The elephants bore down on the Muslims and inflicted great harm.

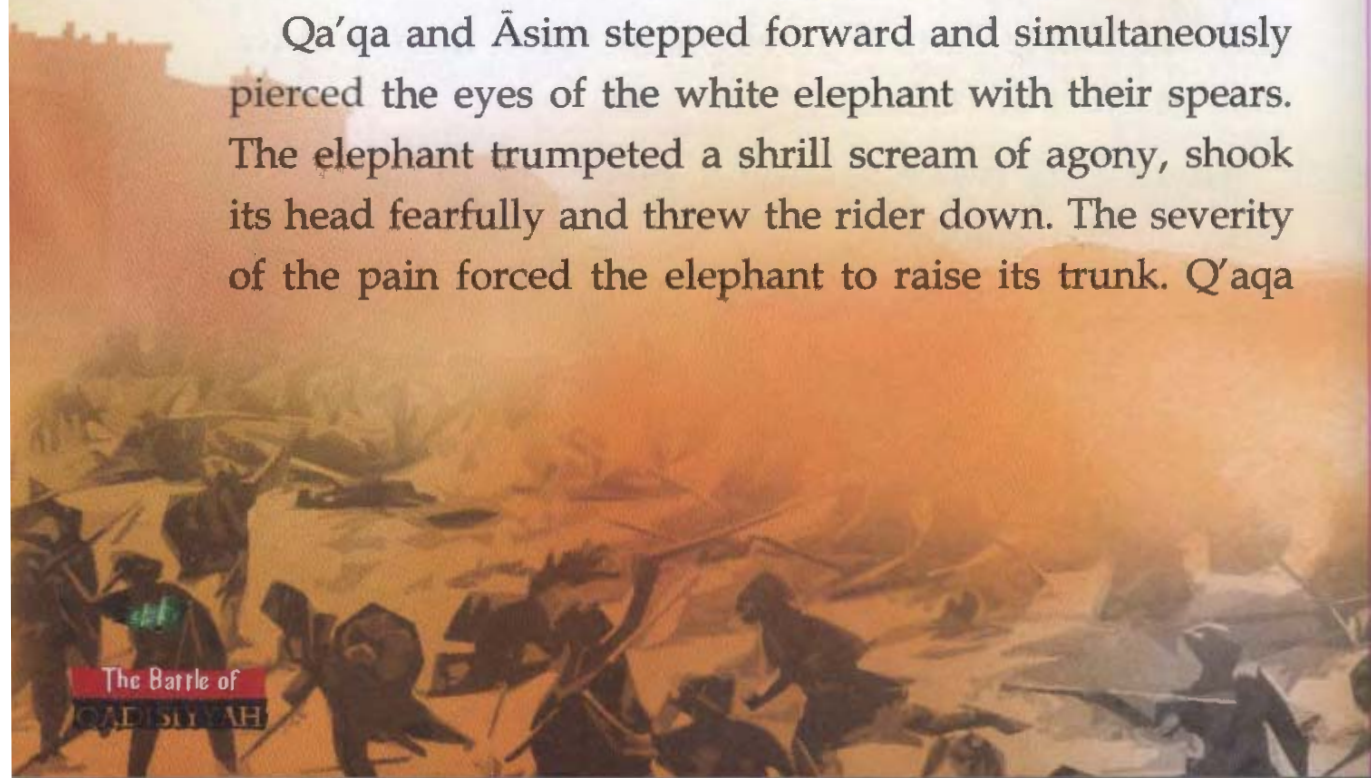
Sa'd bin Abi Waqqas رضي الله عنه Devises a Strategy to Deal with the Elephants

Sa'd bin Abi Waqqas ﷺ had been taking stock of the situation. The elephants had terrified the Muslim army and again threatened to paralyze their efforts. In this emergency, he sent a message to the Iranian Muslims in the Islamic army, asking them how to deal with the elephants. They said that the eye and the trunk were the only vulnerable parts of an elephant. "Aim there and we shall be rid of this calamity," one said.

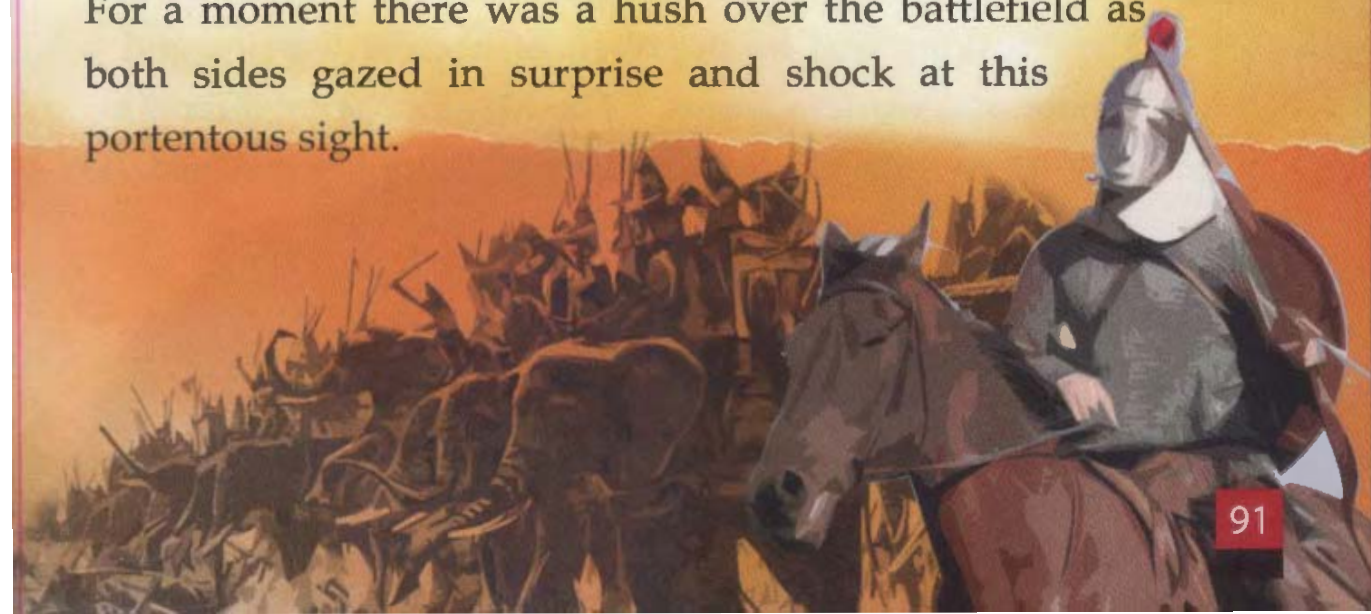
There were two outstanding elephants in the army of the enemy.

One was a white elephant that led the herd and the other one was earthy-coloured. A message was sent from the central command to the two young lions of the tribe of Banu Tamim, namely Qa'qa bin Amr and his brother Āsim bin Amr, to attack the white elephant. Sa'd ﷺ gave Hammal bin Malik and Ribbil bin Amr Asadi the responsibility of attacking the earthy-coloured elephant.

The Lion-Hearted Fighters Attack the Elephants

The action started as soon as the commands were given. To kill an elephant is no ordinary matter. It is a perilous enterprise. Qa'qa and Āsim took their spears and marched forth stealthily with a squadron of horsemen and footmen, and said to them, "Surround the elephant to confuse it." Qa'qa and Āsim mingled with the Iranians, and Hammal and Ribbil did the same. When the elephant saw many people around, it began to sway left and right. Imagine the decision-making power and energy of these brothers!

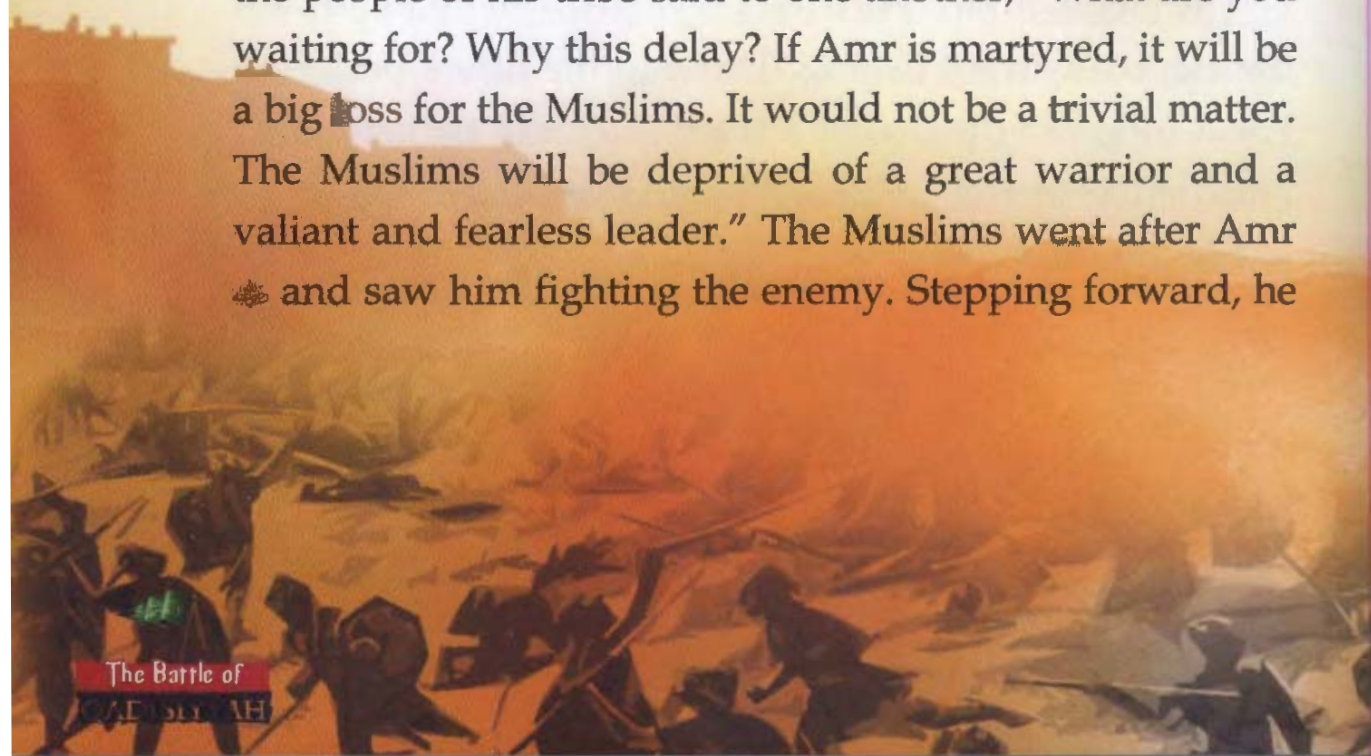
Qa'qa and Āsim stepped forward and simultaneously pierced the eyes of the white elephant with their spears. The elephant trumpeted a shrill scream of agony, shook its head fearfully and threw the rider down. The severity of the pain forced the elephant to raise its trunk. Q'aqa

ﷺ, who was waiting for this, slashed the elephant's trunk with a ferocious blow of his sword. Now blind and mad, the beast darted forward shrieking, and fell onto its side. The Muslims then killed the Iranian riders. The elephant rose to its feet, screaming madly. Meanwhile, Hammal and Ribbil attacked the other earthy-coloured elephant with a squadron of foot soldiers. Hammal pierced its eye. The elephant staggered, sat on its hindquarters and then stood up again. Ribbil struck it again, slashing its trunk. When the elephant rider saw this, he panicked and in an effort to move the beast forward, began to strike its forehead repeatedly with an iron rod. The Muslim soldiers withdrew from the path of the wounded elephant.

Smarting from the pain, the elephants shrieked fearfully. Blind and mad, the creatures bore down on their own army, charging right into the Iranian line. They rushed wildly to-and-fro. Then the entire herd followed them, trunks aloft, trumpeting fiercely as they trampled everything in front of them. They plunged into the river Atiq and disappeared into Madā'in on the opposite shore.

The elephant drivers tried very hard, but failed to stop the elephants from fleeing. Those in the litters perished. For a moment there was a hush over the battlefield as both sides gazed in surprise and shock at this portentous sight.

Amr bin Ma'dikarib's Bravery, Courage

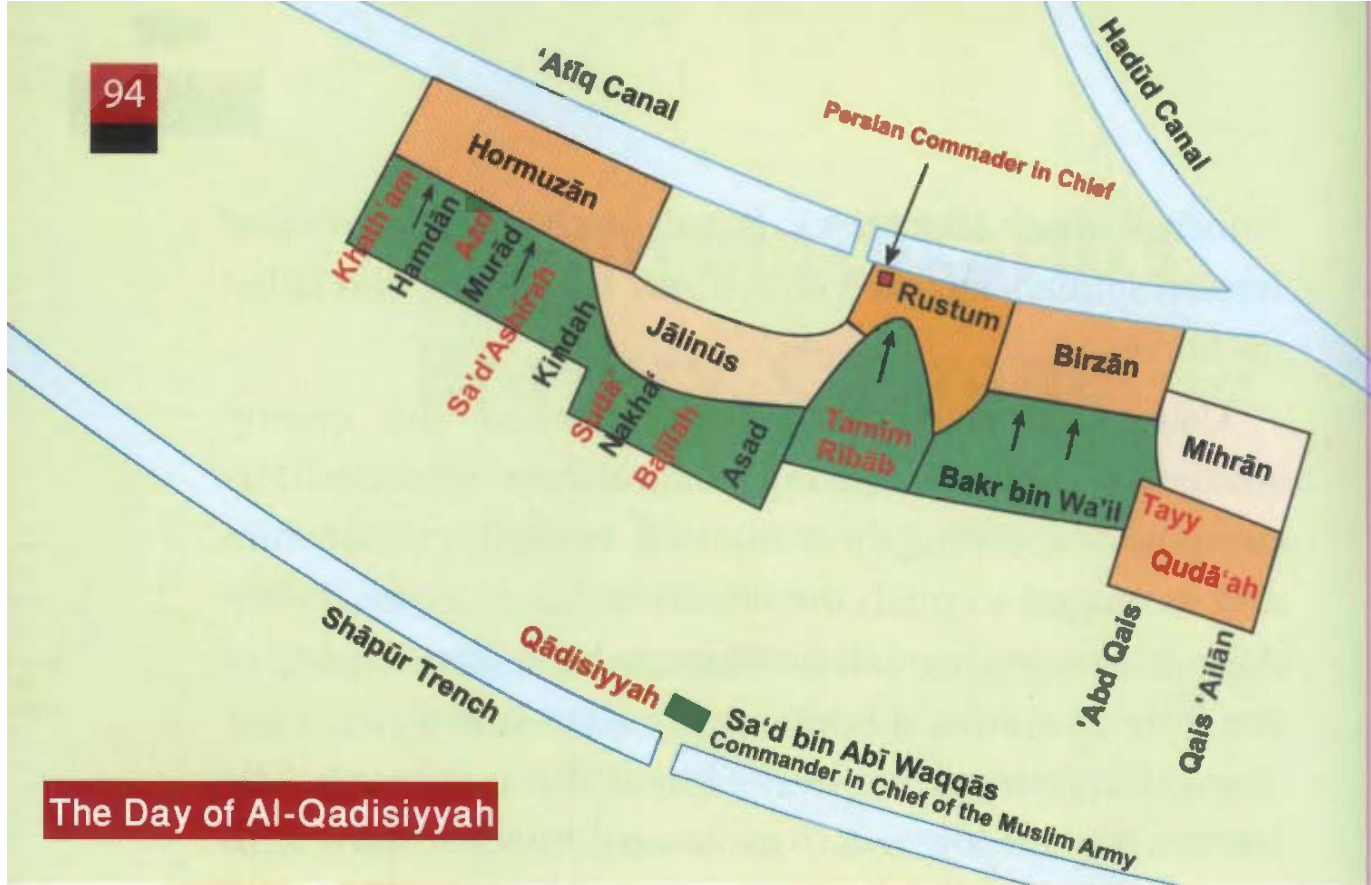
The Battle of Al-Qadisiyyah had extremely brave commanders, whose heroic actions resulted in boosting the morale of the Muslim army.

Amr bin Ma'dikarib ﷺ, the tall and celebrated hero of the tribe of Banu Tamim, proclaimed on the third day of the battle of Al-Qadisiyyah, "Companions! I am going to attack the elephant and those Iranians around it. Wait a while, then follow in my footsteps. Listen, if you're late, you'll lose Abu Thawr (Abu Thawr was the *kunya* or agnomen of Amr bin Ma'dikarib)." He added, "If you reach me late, then where are you going to find someone like Abu Thawr?"

Noble readers, besides being exceptionally brave and courageous, Amr ﷺ was a war expert. This lion of Allah penetrated the enemy camp raising a cloud of dust to hide his movements. His companions in the Muslim camp and the people of his tribe said to one another, "What are you waiting for? Why this delay? If Amr is martyred, it will be a big loss for the Muslims. It would not be a trivial matter. The Muslims will be deprived of a great warrior and a valiant and fearless leader." The Muslims went after Amr ﷺ and saw him fighting the enemy. Stepping forward, he

launched attack after attack. But all of a sudden, a group of Iranian soldiers attacked him, threw him down, and killed his horse.

Using his sword, Amr ﷺ attacked the enemy soldiers who were coming at him from all sides. His companions, seeing him injured, rushed to help him and managed to push the enemy soldiers away. When Amr ﷺ saw an Iranian horseman, he seized the leg of the Iranian soldier's horse and pulled it towards him. The rider spurred the horse but it did not move. The Iranian turned towards Amr ﷺ and attacked him with his sword. Unable to kill Amr ﷺ, the Iranian rider jumped off his horse and fled to join his companions. Amr ﷺ said, "Let me have his reins." They gave him the reins and he mounted the horse.

This is called bravery and valour. The confidence of the companions soared. They had not previously been overawed by the enemy, but these types of actions by their commanders played a significant role in boosting their morale. The fighters realized that their enemy was spineless and that it was not impossible to defeat them. They therefore faced the enemy with added courage.

'Atīq Canal
Hadūd Canal
Persian Commader in Chief
Hormuzān
Hamdān
Murād
Kindah
Jālinūs
Rustum
Birzān
Mihrān
Sa'd'Ashīrah
Nakha'
Asad
Tamīm
Ribāb
Bakr bin Wa'il
Tayy
Qudā'ah
'Abd Qais
Qais 'Ailān
Shāpūr Trench
Qādisiyyah
Sa'd bin Abī Waqqās
Commander in Chief of the Muslim Army

The Day of Al-Qadisiyyah

The Fourth and the Decisive Day

The Day of Al-Qadisiyyah

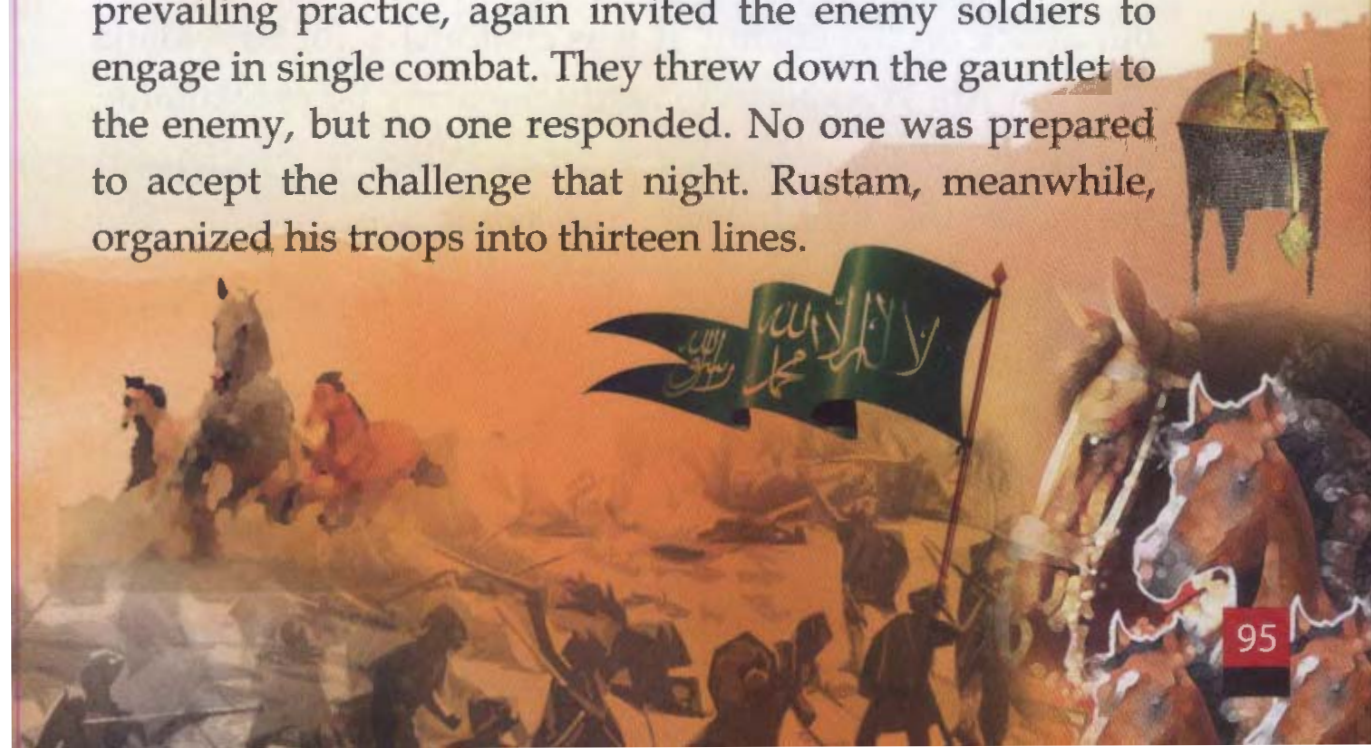
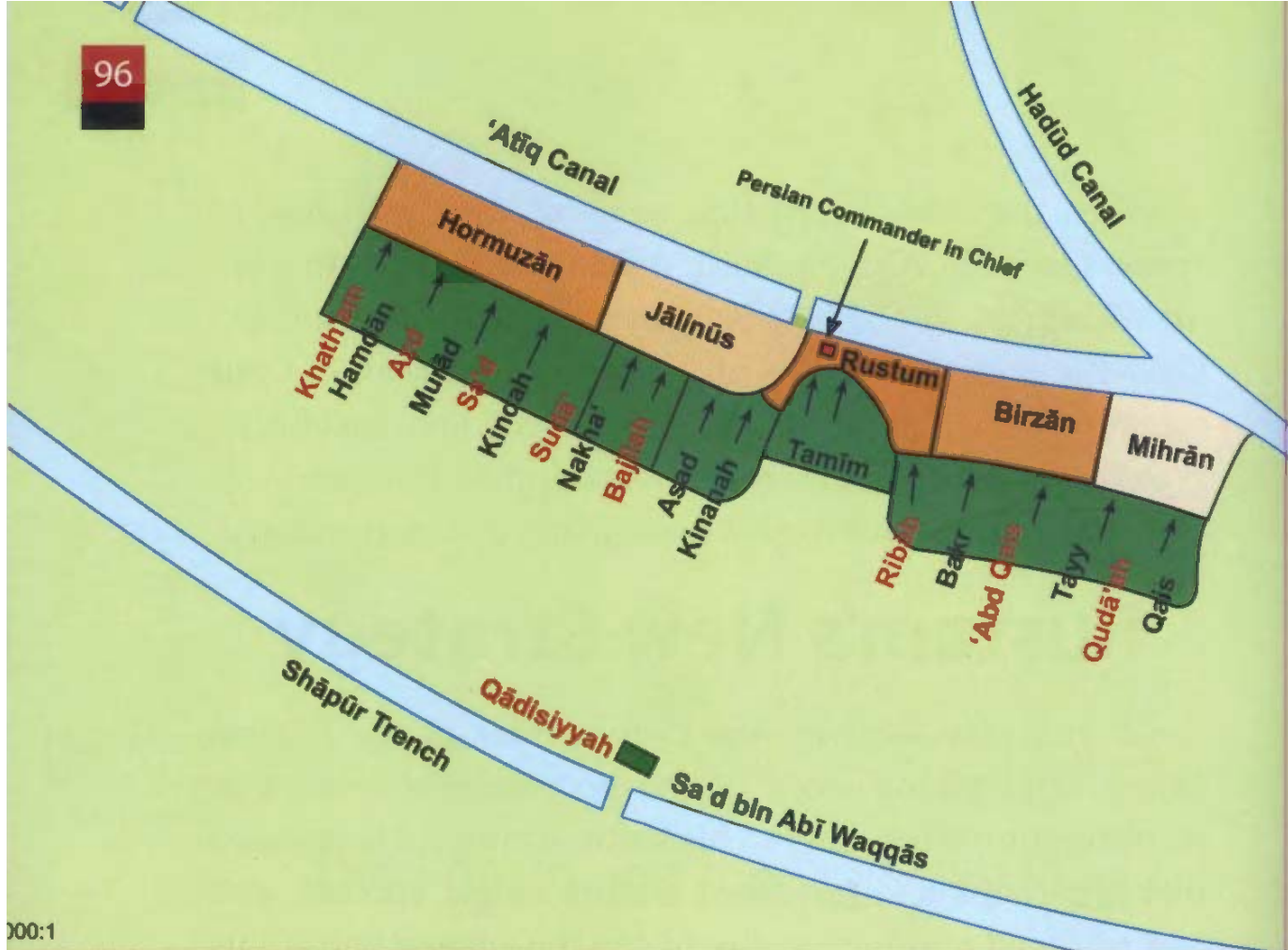
The battle on the fourth and decisive day took place on the plains of Al-Qadisiyyah. It was named the Day of Al-Qadisiyyah. The fighting started before the break of dawn. The Muslims fought with determination and fury. Qa'qa bin Amr ﷺ told his troops, "My lion-hearted companions! Today victory is assured if we take the lead in attacking our enemy and if we are able to have endurance."

When the tribes heard this, some of their men rose to speak. Qays bin Abd Yaghuth, Ash'ath bin Qays, Amr bin Ma'dikarib ﷺ, Ibn Dhi As-Sahmayn Al-Khath'ami and Ibn Dhi'l Burdayn Al-Hilāli - all stood up and said, "O our community! Today will test our bravery and manliness. Watch yourselves, lest these fire-worshipping Iranians leave you behind in the race to give death a hug (for martyrdom)."

Rustam's New Strategy

On that day Rustam, the Commander of the Iranian forces, after taking stock of the previous three days of warfare, completely altered his battle strategy. He realized that his troops had not fared well in single combat, and had achieved nothing worthwhile in the general battle. His elephants had also proved to be useless.

The Muslims had employed a beautifully pragmatic approach and had fought the elephants with great courage and valour. The stampede of the elephants had also been extremely perilous for the enemy. Therefore, ahead of the fourth day, Rustam planned an all-out attack on the Muslims. The Muslims, according to the custom and prevailing practice, again invited the enemy soldiers to engage in single combat. They threw down the gauntlet to the enemy, but no one responded. No one was prepared to accept the challenge that night. Rustam, meanwhile, organized his troops into thirteen lines.

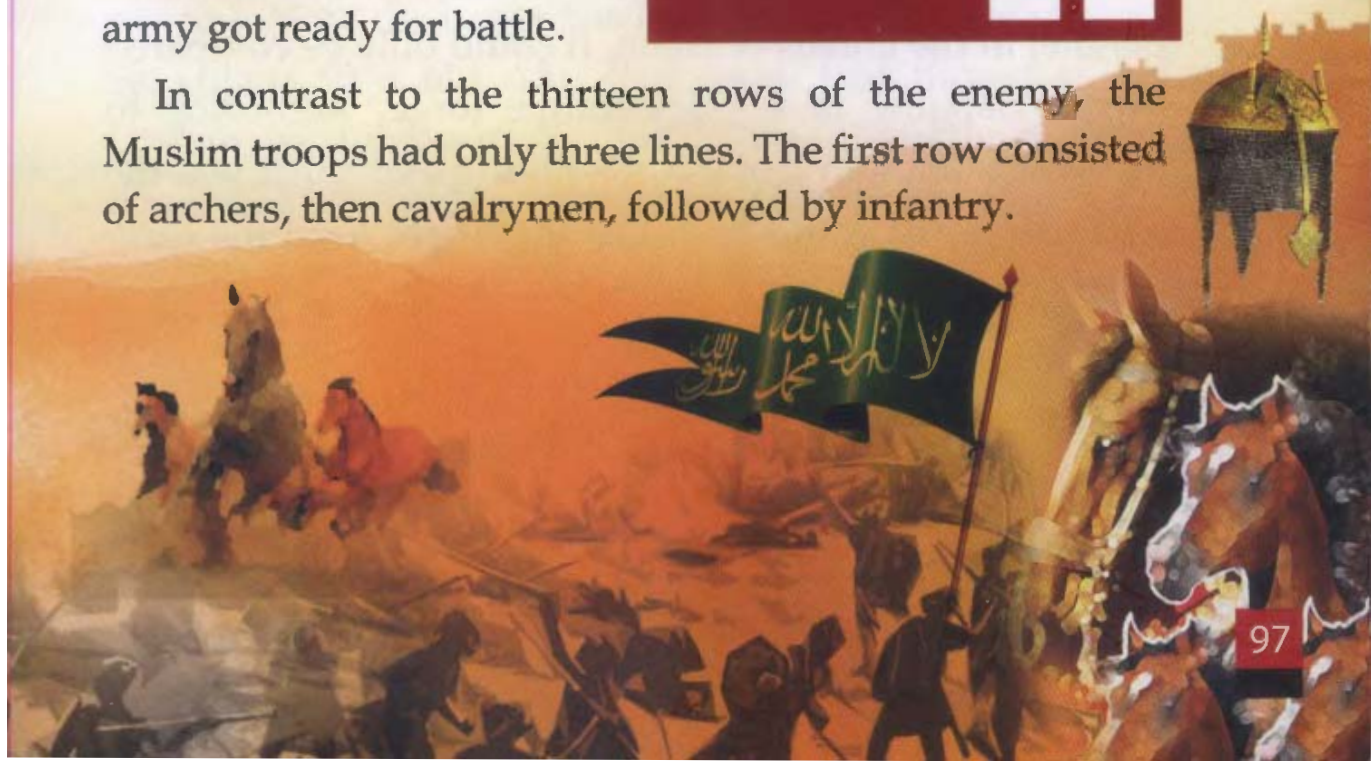
'Atiq Canal
Hadūd Canal
Persian Commander in Chief
Hormuzān
Jālinūs
Rustum
Birzān
Mihrān
Tamīm
Shāpūr Trench
Qādisiyyah
Sa'd bin Abī Waqqās

The Day of Qādisiyyah .... The Retreat of Jālinūs (Qādisiyyah-9)

Qa'qa's Restlessness for an Onslaught

The Muslim army was getting restless to launch an all-out attack on the enemy. It was customary for Sayyidana Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqas ﷺ to ready the army by proclaiming the *takbir* (*Allahu Akbar)* three times. When he proclaimed the *takbir* the fourth time, the battle would start. But

Qa'qa ﷺ and his brave companions carried out the attack without waiting for the *takbirs*. In other words, he launched the attack without Sa'd's permission. Sa'd bin Abi Waqqas ﷺ had been watching him. In accordance with the prevailing principle, it was a transgression of the general rule. But Sa'd ﷺ declared Qa'qa's enterprise adequate. Sa'd ﷺ was a man whose supplications were always answered. He raised his hands and supplicated to Allah to grant Qa'qa ﷺ success. When Sa'd ﷺ proclaimed the customary *takbir* three times, the entire army got ready for battle.

> "The noise of the clashing of arms on the Night of Howling or Clangour (Laylat Al-Harir), was without parallel in the annals of Islam. It could only be compared to the clanging of a blacksmith's forge."

In contrast to the thirteen rows of the enemy, the Muslim troops had only three lines. The first row consisted of archers, then cavalrymen, followed by infantry.

The Night of Howling or Clangour: *Laylat Al-Harir*

Harir was the name given to the night before the dawn of the fourth day at Al-Qadisiyyah. Rustam had decided to launch an all-out attack to avoid the kind of defeat that would destroy the spirit of his troops. This was something he had experienced before.

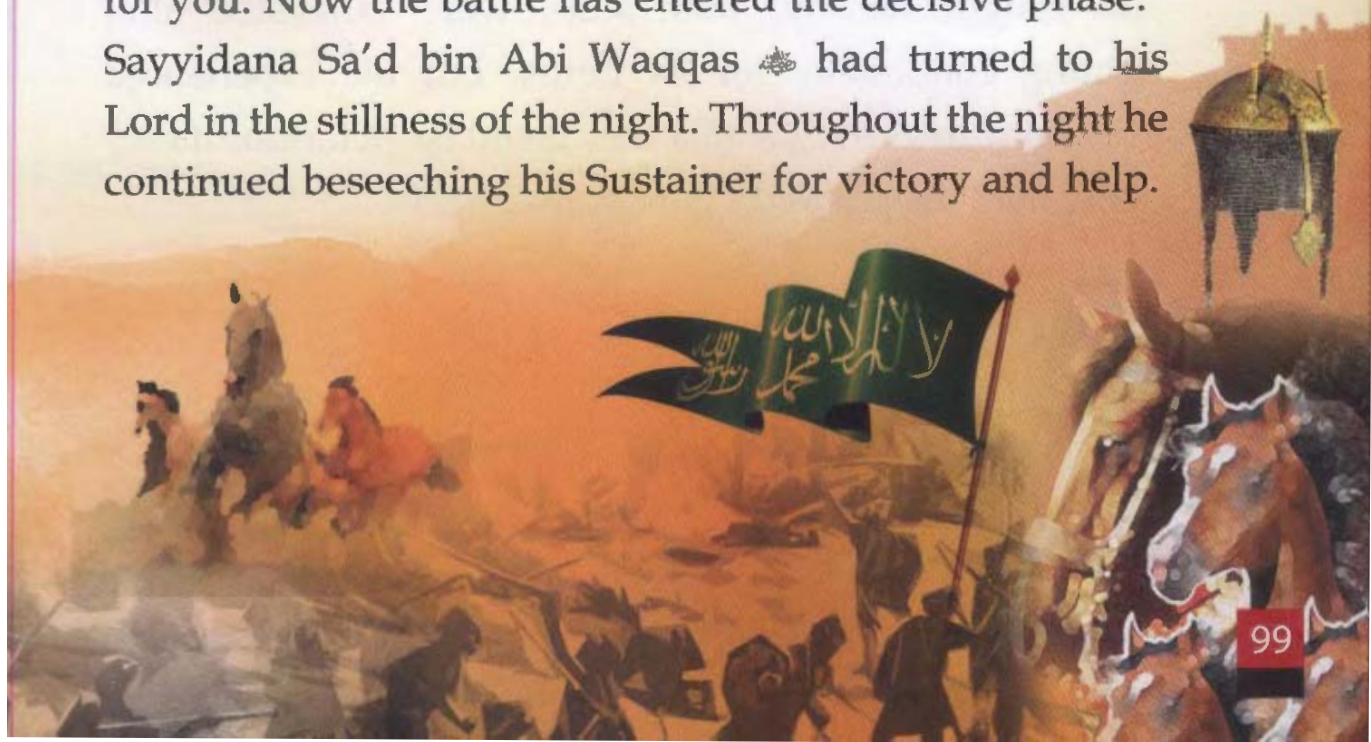
Rustam had arranged his army into thirteen rows. Qa'qa bin Amr started the fight, accompanied by his chosen soldiers, before Sa'd had said the *takbir*. When he proclaimed the customary *takbirs*, the commanders and all troops marched forward, in three ranks - the archers, the cavalry, and the infantry. The fighting was intense. They fought from early in the night until the morning. It was a life-and-death struggle.

The noise of the clashing of arms on the Night of Howling or Clangour (*Laylat Al-Harir*), was without parallel in the annals of Islam. It could only be compared to the clanging of a blacksmith's forge. According to historians, the sound of swords hitting each other was the only thing that could be heard that night until the early

morning. The Arabic term *al-harir* denotes howling or rumbling.

During the Night of Howling and the Day of Al-Qadisiyyah, 2,500 Muslim soldiers were martyred, while from the side of the fire-worshipping Iranians, 10,000 polytheists were consigned to the fire of hell. After losing such an enormous number of fighters, the spirit of the Iranians sank.

> The sound of swords hitting each other was the only thing that could be heard that night until the early morning.

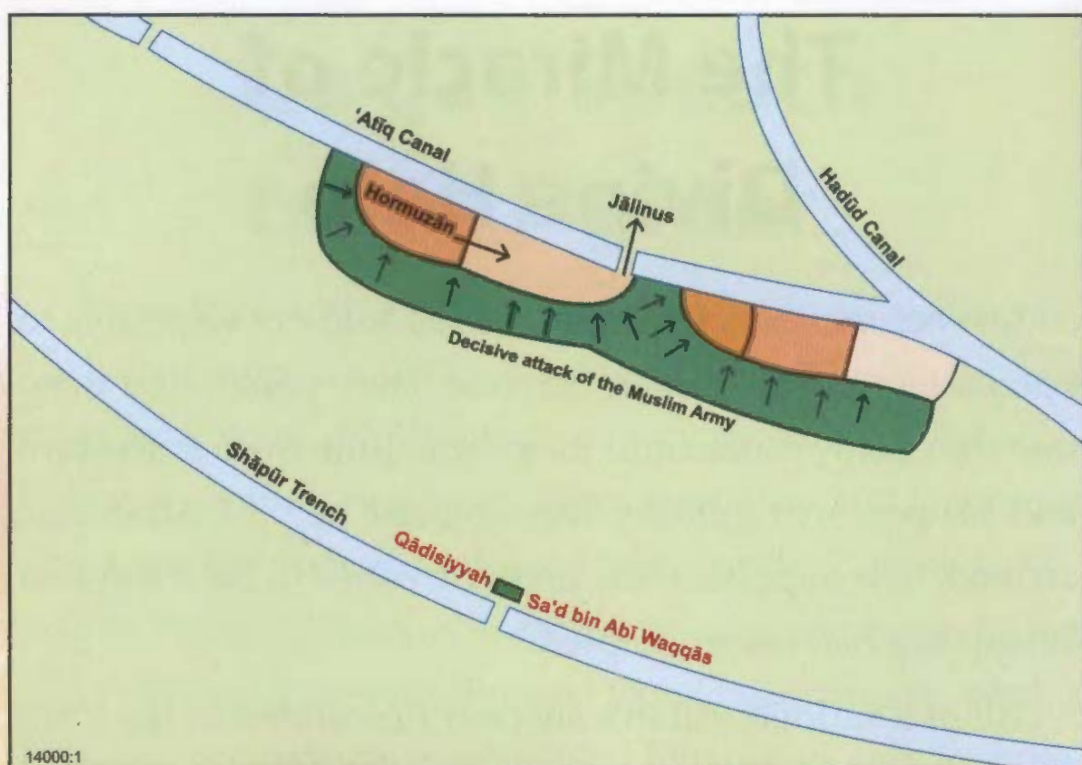
The commanders of the Muslim military units offered guidance and encouragement to their troops to attack the enemy. They gave them advice in a pragmatic and sensible manner. They told them, "O fighters of Islam, show endurance and steadfastness. Victory is waiting for you. Now the battle has entered the decisive phase." Sayyidana Sa'd bin Abi Waqqas ﷺ had turned to his Lord in the stillness of the night. Throughout the night he continued beseeching his Sustainer for victory and help.

Qa'qa's Speech to his Fighters

It was the fourth and last day of the Battle of Qadisiyyah. Early that morning, Qa'qa ؓ addressed the Muslim fighters in a loud voice. Outlining his military strategy, he said, "My companions, warriors, brave men! Rise and launch an attack on the enemy at once. Those attacked immediately will be defeated. Victory can only be achieved by enduring and not fearing anyone. Beware! Don't be impatient. Allah's help is proportionate to patience. Help comes only to those, who while fighting in the way of Allah, remain steadfast and do not lose courage." Qa'qa ؓ was actually referring to a verse of Sūrah Al-Baqarah from the Noble Qur'an.

Wanting to deliver a mortal blow to the enemy, the Muslims launched their onslaught early that morning. Qa'qa ؓ and the other Arab chieftains continued to encourage their soldiers. Qa'qa ؓ motivated them relentlessly. He also fought fiercely. Both sides were exhausted after fighting continually for 24 hours, but the experienced Muslim warriors knew that they could be victorious if they penetrated deep into the core of the enemy.

The Miracle of Divine Help

Just before noon, Qa'qa ﷺ and his soldiers were able to open a gap in the Iranian defence. They penetrated deep into the enemy ranks until they were quite close to Rustam and his personal guards. The singular help of Allah had arrived. The supplications and entreaties of Sa'd bin Abi Waqqas ﷺ had been accepted.

All of a sudden, Allah's succour descended in the form of a violent and destructive westerly wind and storm. The wind was so powerful it blew away the heavily-secured canopy shading Rustam and the throne he was sitting on. This happened while he was marshalling his troops. The canopy was blown into the river Al-Atiq. The sandstorm also stopped the troops from coming to their commander's rescue. The Iranians were terrified.

The Decisive Phase of the Battle of Qādisiyyah (Qādisiyyah-10)
The Murder of Rustum and the Flight of Jālinūs and Hormuzān

The Lesson of Rustam's End

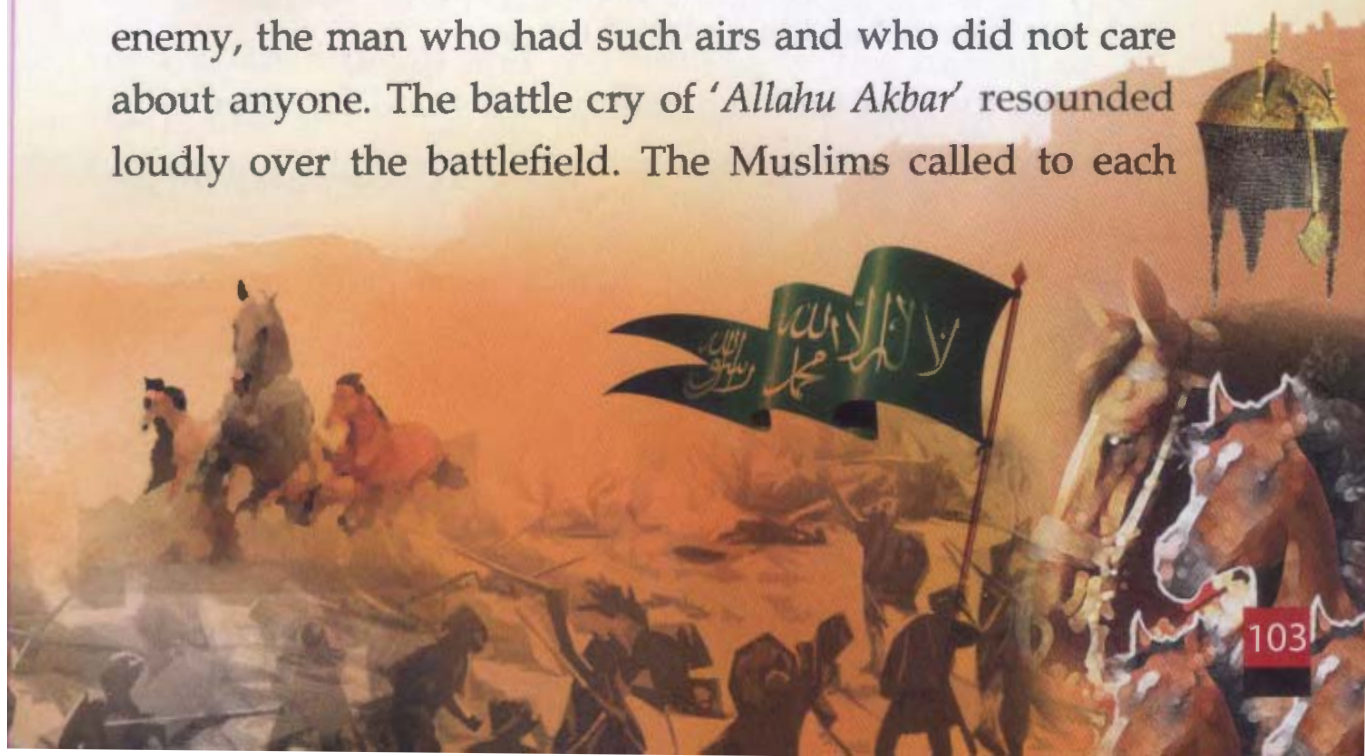
In these historic moments, Allah's lions marched forth under Qa'qa's leadership until they reached Rustam's throne. The Iranian general had taken shelter from the violent storm behind some mules and their litter that had arrived with some of his possessions that day. Rustam shook with fear as death stared him in the face. He was

filled with dread when he saw the Muslim soldiers advancing towards him.

Hilāl bin Ullafah hit the litter under which Rustam had taken shelter. The load fell on Rustam, so that Hilāl could not see him. The load displaced a vertebra in Rustam's spine. But tyrants fear death most so he tried to escape in this condition. His troops had already dispersed. He saw the river Al-Atiq in front of him, threw himself into it and began to swim. Hilāl saw him and went after him. He seized Rustam's leg, pulled him out onto the river bank and killed him.

The Muslims Control Rustam's Throne

Hilāl ran to the throne, sat on it and proclaimed at the top of his voice, "By the Lord of the *Ka'bah,* I've killed Rustam, come to me!" The Muslim fighters turned and gathered around him.

The Muslims were overjoyed. They had killed Allah's enemy, the man who had such airs and who did not care about anyone. The battle cry of *'Allahu Akbar'* resounded loudly over the battlefield. The Muslims called to each

other, "Come see, Kisra's back is broken. The people of Iran have been defeated!"

When Qa'qa ﵁ and the other commanders arrived, they bore down on the Iranians who were still standing their ground. The attack was so fierce that the enemy soldiers lost heart and began to flee in every direction. The Muslim fighters chased the fugitive Iranians relentlessly engaged in battle but was killed by Zuhrah.

With Rustam dead, Jalinus was the commander of the Iranian army. When he heard that Rustam had been killed, he stood on the barrier of the river Al-Atiq and called out loudly to his troops to cross it and escape. The 30,000 troops chained to each other to prevent them from escaping, panicked and threw themselves into Al-Atiq river. The Muslims stabbed them with their spears, and according to the History of Tabari, none of them escaped.

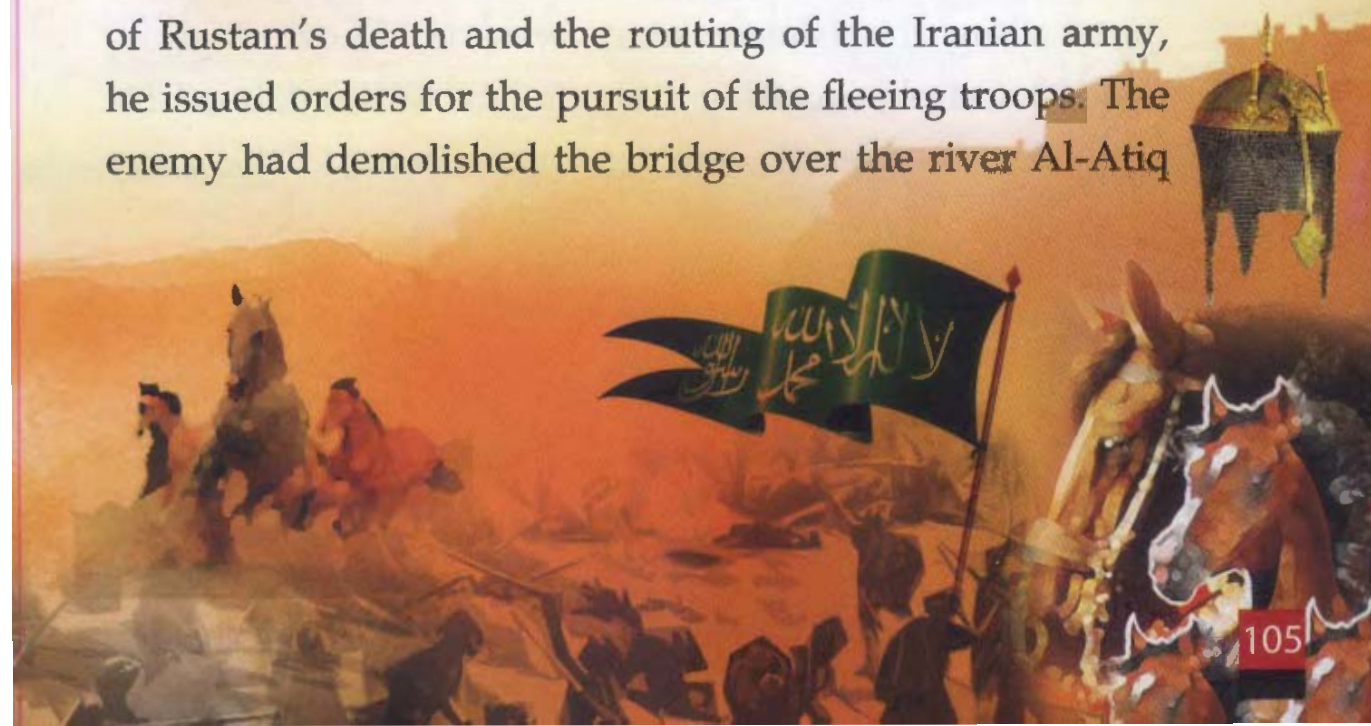
This victory against Persia (Iran) was due to Allah's singular help, Sa'd bin Abi Waqqas' supremely pragmatic war strategy and the endless sacrifices made by fearless and brave men like Qa'qa bin Amr ﵁.

It was the first time the enemy had stood for three long days against the Muslims. In those days, battles used to

last for only one day. But the Iranians had made exhaustive preparations for this battle because they realized that the Muslims were becoming extremely successful. They saw this battle as their last chance to save their empire.

The Iranians had deployed their highly successful and experienced general, Rustam, for the battle. The Iranian army was four times stronger than that of the Muslims. In actuality, the enemy had 120,000 troops. The Muslims only had an army of 30,000 men. In addition to this, Rustam had the army reserves, servicemen and troops belonging to other sections. Yezdgird had also sent fresh reinforcements daily.

This was undoubtedly a historic victory for the Muslims. But they had to make myriad sacrifices for it. Unlike previous battles, historians estimate that 8,500 Muslim fighters were martyred. Despite these huge losses they had fought with great bravery and valour. They also showed that they were prepared to lay down their lives for the sake of Allah.

As soon as Sa'd bin Abi Waqqas ﷺ received the news of Rustam's death and the routing of the Iranian army, he issued orders for the pursuit of the fleeing troops. The enemy had demolished the bridge over the river Al-Atiq

to thwart the pursuit, but a renowned son of Islam and the commander of a detachment began to pursue the fleeing Iranians with 300 men.

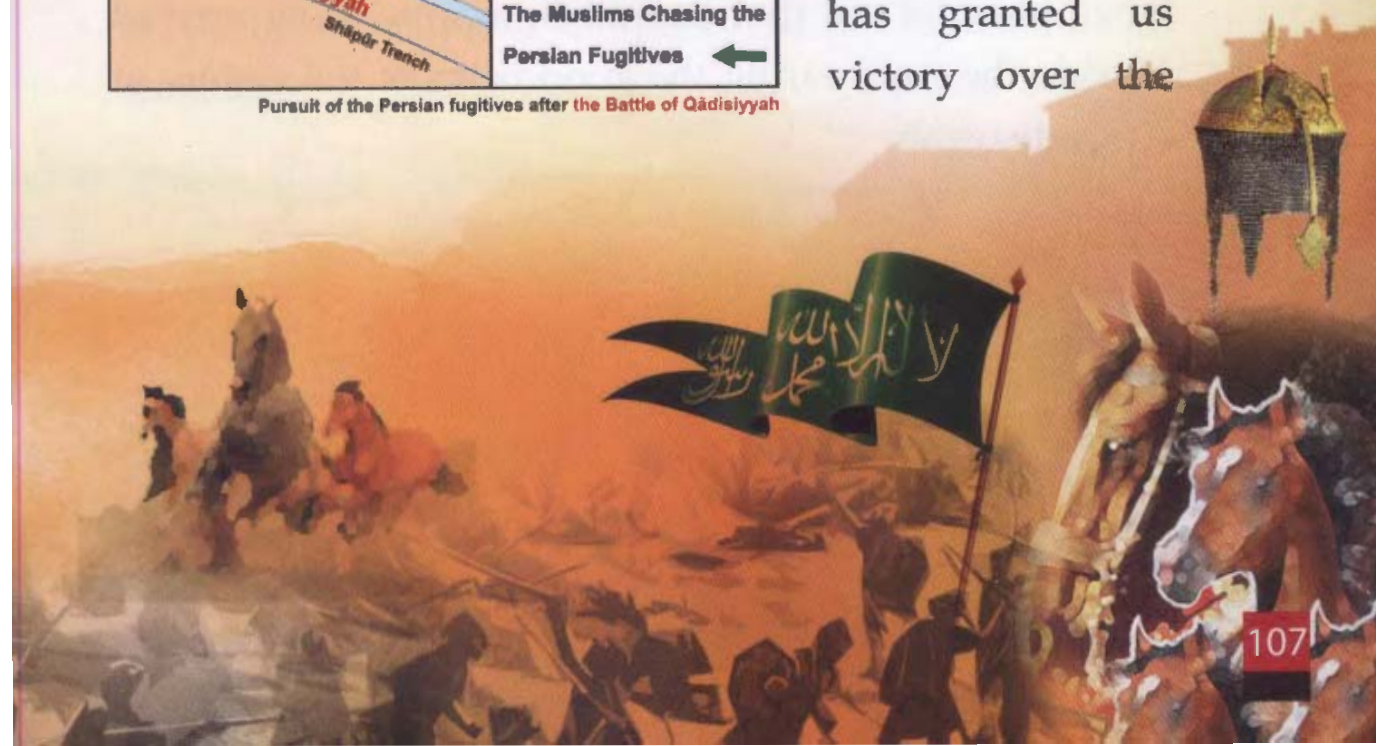
When he reached the broken bridge, Zuhrah bin Hawiyyah Al-Tamimi and the rest of the horsemen waded through the river. Zuhrah commanded his cavalry to cross the river by running their horses on the debris of the demolished bridge. He then caught up with the fleeing Iranians with Jālinus in their rear guard, protecting them. Jālinus was considered a great and brave general of the Iranian army. Zuhrah caught up with him and forced him to fight. Jālinus, reluctantly engaged in battle, but was killed by Zuhrah.

Zuhrah then took possession of his horse, sword and other weapons, and resumed his pursuit of the other fugitive Iranians. They killed most of the Iranian troops over a long distance. Zuhrah and his cavalry then returned to their camp in Al-Qadisiyyah.

Sa'd bin Abi Waqqas was the commander-in-chief but the other commander sitting in Madinah and marshalling the Islamic army was the fourth Rightly-Guided Caliph, Sayyidana Umar bin Al-Khattab! He had been ceaselessly sending instructions to the army

Pursuit of the Persian fugitives after the Battle of Qādisiyyah

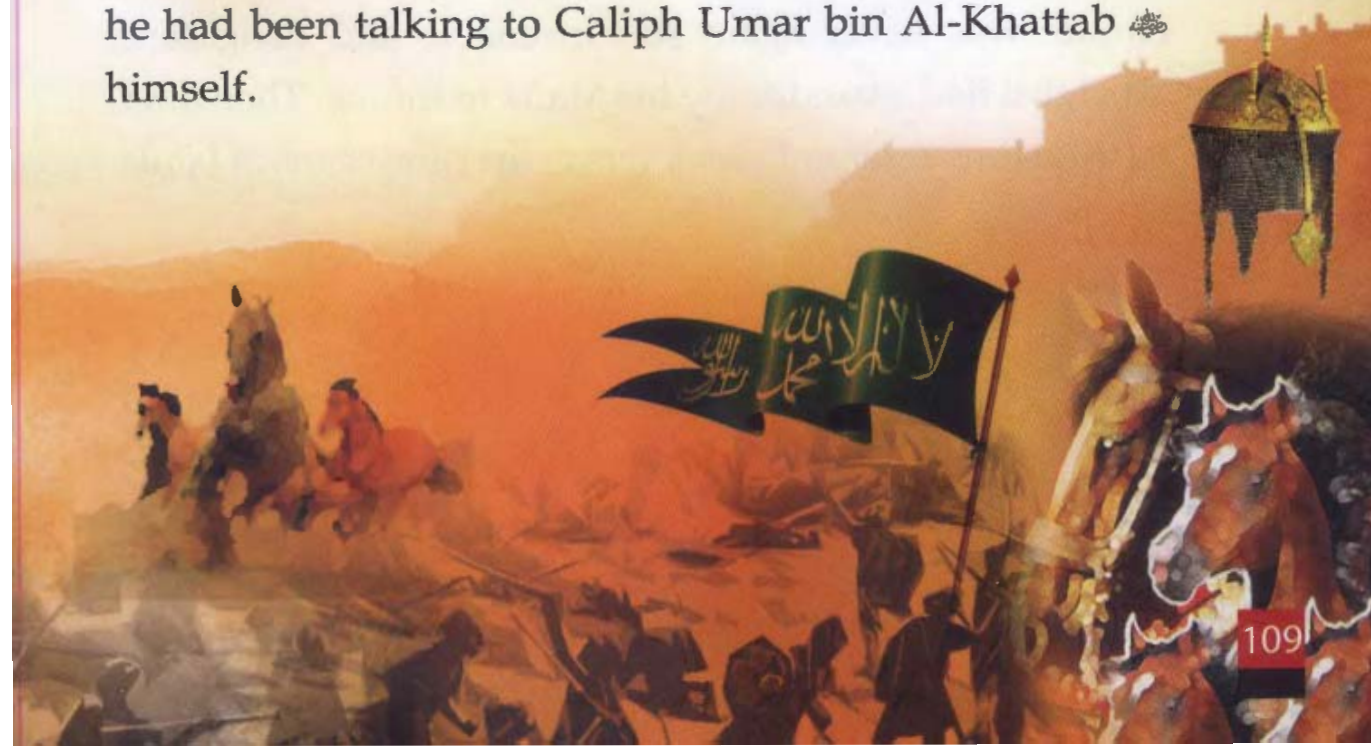
across a distance of thousands of kilometres.

Sa'd bin Abi Waqqas ﷺ sent a message with Sa'd bin Umaylah Al-Fazari to the Commander of the Believers, Umar Al-Fāruq ﷺ, to inform him of the victory. He wrote a letter to Sayyidana Umar Al-Fāruq ﷺ, stating, "It is Allah's singular grace and blessing upon us that He has granted us victory over the

Iranians. The victory came after a long fight and ferocious upheaval. The Muslims were also well armed but the enemy confronted the Muslims with a powerful and huge army that no eye had ever seen before. From the Muslims, Sa'd bin Ubayd, the Qur'an reader, and many others were martyred whose real number is known to Allah alone. When night fell, they used to recite the Qur'an plentifully in the loneliness of the night. These fighters were such lions that real lions did not resemble them. Those who survived are also fortunate, their status is unequalled; but those who were martyred are superior to them by virtue of their martyrdom."

Sayyidana Umar Al-Fāruq was so deeply interested in the outcomes of this consequential campaign that he used to get the most recent information about Al-Qadisiyyah from every caravan that came to Madinah. He used to go outside the gates of Madinah early in the morning, to see if he could, by chance, meet some messenger from the battlefield. He would then return before midday. So it was significant, and a blessing, when he went out that day when a camel-rider arrived outside the city bearing the good news of the victory at Al-Qadisiyyah.

The messenger was about to enter Madinah, when Umar bin Al-Khattab ﵁ stopped him and asked, "Where are you coming from, O young man?"

The messenger replied, "From the field of Al-Qadisiyyah!" He did not recognize Umar ﵁. Consider the humility of Umar bin Al-Khattab ﵁ that he did say not he was the Commander of the Believers. The bearer of the news was mounted on a she-camel, while Umar ﵁ followed him on foot.

Umar ﵁ then asked him, "How is the situation in Al-Qadisiyyah? What is the outcome of the battle?" The messenger then told him the good news of the victory of the Muslims. Umar ﵁ said to the messenger, "Just narrate the whole incident. How did the Muslims win?" The bearer of the news began to recount the detail while riding his she-camel. Unrecognized, Umar ﵁ followed him quickly on foot, gleaning the outline of the battle. Entering Madinah, the people saluted Umar ﵁ addressing him as the Commander of the Believers. It was only then the bearer of the news realized that he had been talking to Caliph Umar bin Al-Khattab ﵁ himself.

Abashed, he cried out, "Why didn't you tell me that you yourself are the Caliph?" The caliph replied simply, "It is well, my brother." Such was the unassuming manner of a man who, at that moment, was greater than both the Caesar and Chosroes.

This battle was extremely important because it saw the participation of more than 70 of the Prophet's Companions from the Battle of Badr, more than 300 who had taken part in the "Pledge of Good Pleasure", and 300 other Companions who had engaged in the Conquest of Makkah. More than 70 other Companions of the Prophet ﷺ also took part.

Sa'd bin Abi Waqqas ؓ stayed in Al-Qadisiyyah for another two months after the victory waiting for the instructions of Sayyidana Umar bin Al-Khattab ؓ. After two months, he received the command to march forth and conquer Madā'in.

The Battle of Al-Qadisiyyah is a major chapter in our golden history. It saw the overpowering of the fire-worshippers. After this, the military power of the Iranian empire was never again so formidable and dangerous. Yezdgird fled, abandoning his Madā'in throne. Thereafter, the Muslims emerged victorious in the campaigns of Jalūla,

Nahāvand, Ahwāz, Isfahān and Hamdān and many other places, so that the flag of Islam fluttered across Iran.

Finally, during the conquests of Khurasān, in the year 651 AH, the King Yezdgird was killed. This meant that the 420-year-old Sasanid Empire had come to an end!

Note

Our article has been sourced from these major Islamic history books: Al-Bidaya wa Al-Nihayah; Seerah Amir ul Mu'mineen Caliph Umar Bin Al-Khattab by Dr. Muhammad Ali Al-Sallabi; and Al-Muntazam fi Tarikil Muluuk wa Al-Ummam.